

TENNA (AFP) — The rich and glamorous Tenna's exclusive ball, the city's most modest celebration down the road. The Opéra German for "Tenna's" play on the name of the Fine Arts School, 9 while the grand and opulent ball at the world-famous house, the Grand Hotel, hosted by Prince Thomas Albrecht, counts the most glamorous list. The ball, which happens to be a fundraiser for the Austrian's more modest ones. Adolf Hitler was here before making his way to Germany, and Michael

Rockefeller's grand-daughter to play Lewinsky

NEW YORK (AFP) — Grand-daughter of Rockefeller, who was the heart of the scandal, is to play the part of Monica Lewinsky for a New York theatre group. The Rockefeller family is famous for its political and social influence. What with all this going on in Washington, the group has decided to add a show about the scandal. The group is called "The Clinton Affair" and is led by Bill Clinton.

Church urges British MPs to set an example

LONDON (AFP) — The head of the Church of England has urged Prime Minister Tony Blair to set an example for his government by not using nuclear weapons. The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, has said that ministers are not their own masters and that they are accountable to God. He said that the church's stance on nuclear weapons is clear and that it is a matter of conscience.

Britain may pardon wartime witch

LONDON (AFP) — The woman to be pardoned for a wartime offence may be a witch. Britain's Home Secretary, Jack Straw, has said that he is considering a pardon for a woman who was convicted of witchcraft during the war. The woman, Helen Duncan, was a pacifist and was convicted of treason for her activities.

Stephen King 'X-Files' script does make the grade

NEW YORK (AP) — Horror writer Stephen King's script for the movie "The X-Files" has been chosen by Fox. The script, which was written by King and Gillian Flynn, is based on the popular television series. Fox has acquired the rights to the script and will be producing the movie.

Britain sends submarine to the Gulf — press

LONDON (AFP) — A British nuclear submarine has been sent to the Gulf as part of the military build-up against Iraq, it was reported Tuesday. The mass-selling Sun newspaper said HMS Spartan's role would be to give early warning of Iraqi attacks. Later the Ministry of Defence refused to confirm the report saying the movements of submarines were never discussed. Britain has already sent the aircraft carrier HMS Invincible and two other warships to the Gulf. A second carrier HMS Illustrious is stationed off Gibraltar to respond if needed. On Monday, British Foreign Minister Robin Cook repeated in the House of Commons that while the government was still seeking a diplomatic solution, "we have not, nor will we, rule out force."

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مستقلة يومية سياسية عربية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراية

Jordan will not allow refugees from Iraq into its territories

Prince Hassan: Military escalation would have destructive consequences not only on Iraq but the region as a whole

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan will not allow Iraqi refugees to enter its territory if the U.S. launches an attack on Iraq, Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi said Tuesday. The minister was responding to news reports that Jordan has discussed with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plans to accommodate possible refugees from Iraq.

Dr. Mutawi, however, confirmed that Jordan has made an agreement with the UNHCR and other international agencies to help assist the refugees "only on the Iraqi side of the border."

Also yesterday, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, met with the secretary general of the French foreign ministry, Bertrand Dufourcq, who was on his way to Baghdad, Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Petra quoted Prince Hassan as telling Mr. Dufourcq that any military escalation "would have a destructive consequence not only on Iraq but also the region as a whole."

The Crown Prince said that Jordan will continue its efforts with the all concerned parties

to reach a breakthrough to the deadlock, resulting from Iraq's refusal to allow U.N. weapons inspectors to enter presidential palaces.

Mr. Dufourcq, briefed Prince Hassan on France's stand on the crisis and President Jacques Chirac's keenness to resolve the deadlock.

Petra quoted the French envoy, who arrived in Baghdad late Tuesday aboard a French plane, as telling Prince Hassan that his country "prefers a diplomatic solution to the crisis that would ensure Iraq's compliance with U.N. resolutions."

The Turkish news agency Anadolu meanwhile announced Tuesday that the U.N. Sanctions Committee has authorized Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem to fly to Baghdad through northern Iraq for talks on the crisis with Iraqi officials.

Dr. Mutawi said Jordan's decision to prevent refugees from entering the country was taken "to avoid any repetition of what happened in 1991," when Jordan received more than 1.5 million people from different nationalities who fled from Kuwait and Iraq.

The Ministry of Interior is coordinating with international agencies to assist in case hos-



Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, welcomes French President Jacques Chirac's envoy Bertrand Dufourcq at the Royal Palace in Amman on Tuesday. Mr. Dufourcq left Amman for Baghdad on a special U.N. sanctioned flight on Tuesday in an attempt to persuade Iraq to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors (Reuters photo)

ilities break out and force people to flee Iraq, the minister said following a Cabinet session.

"The Ministry of Interior has issued instructions (to the concerned departments) to deal with the expected refugee

problem with every possible humanitarian effort that can be made in the border area," he added.

The minister denied that there was a deployment of troops at the borders with Iraq but only "security preparations

to deal with any urgent circumstances that might result from a military strike."

In a television interview broadcast on JTV on Monday, Prince Hassan said that

(Continued on page 7)

Pharmacist killed, another injured in two separate attacks in Amman

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — One pharmacist was killed and another severely injured in Jabal Taji, a few kilometres away, last night.

Farouq Malhas, 37, owner of Wadi Al Nasser Pharmacy was found dead behind his counter at around 7:00 p.m. last night with one bullet wound to the forehead, coroners who examined the scene of crime told reporters.

An hour later, police were called to investigate a similar attack in Jabal Taji, only three kilometres away, in which Abad Ali, 50, owner of Dala Pharmacy was shot in the shoulder by an unidentified man.

Eyewitnesses in Jabal Al Nasser told the Jordan Times

that Mr. Malhas' body was discovered lying on the floor of his shop by a neighbour who informed police.

One eyewitness said he was walking past Dala Pharmacy when he saw a man from behind waving a pistol at the pharmacist then shooting at him.

"The man shot Abad (Ali) once and when he tried to shoot again he apparently ran out of bullets so he pushed him against the counter glass and fled the scene," the witness said.

"I ran after him for almost 1,000 metres, but he was too fast and I lost him," he said.

Another witness told the Jordan Times he heard Mr. Ali screaming for help, then "came out of his pharmacy holding his left shoulder and his face full of blood."

Officials present at the crime scene refused to comment on what they thought the motives behind the attacks, but hinted that both attacks could be related.

Criminal Prosecutor Imad Kilani, Pathologist Mo'men Hadidi were holding initial investigations.

Neighbours described the two victims as being liked by everybody. Those interviewed by reporters said they did not think any of them had enemies.

In October of 1994, three pharmacists were killed in Rawand, Saad and Wadi Saqra pharmacies, in incidents that triggered panic within the community that a killer was targeting pharmacists. Officials then said that theft or drugs were the motives behind the killings but no one was arrested in connection with these murders.

Paper confiscations are delaying tactic — newspaper publishers

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Publishers Tuesday accused the government of delaying the implementation of last week's High Court press law ruling after police confiscated all issues of a weekly that recently resumed publication.

Police on Monday ordered the confiscation of all copies of Al Hawadeth Al Sa'a weekly, which printed its first post-ruling edition following the Jan. 26 court decision that last May's press revisions resulting in the revocation of weeklies' licences were unconstitutional.

"The government's main objective is to put off the implementation of the ruling," said Tajeddine Hroub, publisher of Al Hawadeth Al Sa'a. "The government's legal view is wrong and we have a big question mark over its knowledge of the law."

Al Hawadeth Al Sa'a was one of 13 weeklies banned last September under the amendments to the 1993 press law, criticised at home and abroad for stifling freedom of expression.

Article 19 welcomes High Court decision on temporary press law

AMMAN (J.T.) — Article 19 has welcomed the High Court's recent ruling that the controversial May 1997 amendments to the press law were unconstitutional because they were enacted without Parliament's ratification.

In a petition to His Majesty King Hussein, the London-based press freedom group on Tuesday urged the government to "annual all decisions taken against journalists on the basis of that law, including the ministerial decision which resulted in the effective banning of 13 weekly newspapers."

Article 19 said the court's decision offered the government an opportunity to draft a new press law in consultation with journalists and the Jordanian Press Association (JPA) in order to "guarantee the fundamental rights to freedom of expression and access to information according to Jordan's international human rights obligations and Constitution."

Article 19 recommended that the new draft law abolish any form of licensing regime, cancel mandatory membership in the JPA as a condition to practice journalism, strip the Press and Publications Department of its censorship power, and divest the government of its monopoly over radio and television, as well as its ownership in the press establishments.

"Article 19 believes that only an open and public dialogue between the government and civil society institutions concerned with human rights and freedom of expression can help improve the human rights and democratic situation in Jordan and contribute to the advent of a modern and democratic press and publications law," the statement concluded.

The Ministry of Information and the Press and Publications Department ordered the confiscation after the government said that all weeklies which intended to resume publication must apply for a

new licence under the 1993 Press and Publications Law. "The government has not yet been informed through

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq invites congressmen to Baghdad, Russia declares shifts in Iraqi position

The USA, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the Palestinian Authority are 'one mind' on need to resolve crisis diplomatically — Albright

Combined agency dispatches

THE IRAQI parliament has invited members of the U.S. Congress to accompany weapons experts on visits to presidential palaces, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported Tuesday.

INA, quoting Nizar Hamdoun, Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations, said the Iraqi National Assembly has sent an invitation to the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to visit "the people's presidential palaces for any length of time."

Mr. Hamdoun conveyed the invitation to Newt Gingrich, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, it said.

"The Iraqi invitation expresses readiness to receive at the people's palaces the congressional delegation and the technical experts, chosen by the delegation, at any time and for any length of time," INA said.

Russia insisted on Tuesday it had made progress in efforts to persuade Iraq to comply with U.N. demands and head off the prospect of U.S. military action.

But confusion remained about the substance of Russian envoy Viktor Posva-lyuk's talks in Iraq after Baghdad denied Russian reports that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had agreed to open eight new presidential sites to U.N. arms inspectors.

Kremlin spokesman Sergei

Yastzhebnsky told a news briefing: "The mission of the special representative, Deputy Foreign Minister Posva-lyuk, is continuing and is bringing positive results."

He added: "There are shifts in the Iraqi position which mean movement towards meeting the demands of the world community. We hope this will make it possible to continue implementing U.N. resolutions on destruction of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq."

So far only Britain has given unequivocal backing to the U.S. campaign. British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Tuesday: "This isn't Britain linking itself with U.S. policy. This is British policy. We want Saddam Hussein dealt with."

The United States and key Arab countries are of "one mind" on the need to resolve the Iraq-U.N. crisis diplomatically, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said on Tuesday.

"On Iraq today I can say that the USA, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the Palestinian Authority are one mind," Ms. Albright said at a press conference after talks in Cairo with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Ms. Albright was speaking on the final leg of a Middle East tour aimed at drumming up support for a possible U.S. military strike against Iraq if it fails to open presidential sites to U.N. weapons inspectors.

"This crisis has been created by Iraqi defiance. We prefer to resolve it diplomatically but if diplomacy fails, responsibility for the grave consequences that will follow will lie at the feet of the government of Iraq," Ms. Albright said.

In Bahrain earlier on Tuesday, Ms. Albright expressed confidence that the U.S. would have "all the cooperation we need" from Gulf states in the event that military action against Iraq became necessary.

"I have had very positive support whether from King Hussein, the emir here, or Kuwait or Saudi Arabia for what we are seeking," she said after talks with the emir, Sheikh Isa Ben Sulman Al Khalifa, and other officials.

But an American request to use Saudi bases in the event of military action was left unresolved. "The crown prince took the military issues on board" and would discuss them further with

(Continued on page 7)

'Annan's proposal seeks to weaken Iraqi position'

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq said Tuesday a proposed increase in its oil sales under the U.N. oil-for-food deal was an attempt to weaken its demands for a lifting of the economic embargo imposed over the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

An information ministry spokesman, reacting to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's offer to allow Iraq to sell more oil, said such an increase was aimed at weakening Iraq's campaign for a lifting of the economic embargo.

"An increase in crude sales under the oil-for-food deal would weaken Iraq's demand for a lifting of the unfair embargo," the official INA news agency quoted the spokesman as saying.

"Despite the good intentions of Secretary General Kofi Annan, this recommendation is based on American and perhaps British plans to steal more than 50 per cent of Iraq's oil resources, as is the case in the oil-for-food deal," the spokesman said.

"The solution is to total lifting of the embargo as quickly as possible." The 15 members of the U.N. Security Council on Monday welcomed Mr. Annan's proposal to raise Iraqi oil sales from \$2 billion every six months to \$5.2 billion.

Of the total, \$3.55 billion, compared with \$1.3 billion currently, would be used to meet Iraq's urgent humanitarian needs, while 30 per cent would go towards a Kuwaiti compensation fund and four per cent would finance the work of U.N. agencies such as the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarming Iraq.

Israel launches anti-panic campaign over Iraqi threat

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's government launched a public relations campaign Tuesday to fight rising popular anxiety over the possibility that Iraq could attack the country with chemical or bacteriological weapons.

After days of hesitating over how to respond publicly to fears Iraq might strike Israel if attacked by the United States in the dispute over U.N. weapons inspections, officials came out Tuesday to state that the likelihood of Iraqi aggression was minimal.

"The possibility that Iraq will attack us is very small and we have enough time to complete preparations to ensure the security of the population," Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said on Israel public radio.

"Iraq's capabilities to reach Israel with any kind of missiles are judged to be almost zero, but no government can take a chance even if it's one in a million," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's spokesman, David Bar-Ilan, told AFP.

He said Mr. Netanyahu would issue a similar statement later in the day to counter public alarm, which he said was "wholly whipped up by the media."

Other officials noted that Iraq had issued no threat to attack Israel, as it did during the 1991 Gulf war when 39 Iraqi Scuds hit Israel killing two persons.

Mr. Netanyahu's administration had come under sharp criticism for taking a low profile over the Iraqi crisis as public anxieties soared, sending thousands of people to army centres to pick up gas masks and other protective equipment against biological and chemical arms.

(Continued on page 3)

Palestinians call on U.S. to put more pressure on Israel

Arafat worried Iraq crisis complicating peace

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said Monday that the mounting crisis over Iraq was bound to complicate the region's stalled peace process. "The crisis is going to complicate the situation in the Middle East peace process," he told journalists after meeting U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in this West Bank town. Ms. Albright also met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem earlier Monday in her efforts to get the peace process out of its 10-month impasse. Mr. Netanyahu said: "What's happening in the Gulf shows very well what sort of Middle East we are living in." Israeli and Palestinian delegates are to travel to Washington next week to resume negotiations.

of them blaming each other for the 10-month deadlock without "taking the tough decisions," according to the Israeli press.

The only progress made during her mission was a promise by both sides to send delegations to Washington for further talks next week.

But the Israeli press dismissed the step, saying low-level delegations were unlikely to lead to any breakthrough after both Ms. Albright and U.S. President Bill Clinton failed to budge either side in direct talks with both Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu over the past month.

In their talks on Sunday, Mr.

Arafat outright rejected U.S. ideas presented by Ms. Albright for a step-by-step troop withdrawal by Israel tied to Palestinian moves to fight anti-Israeli militants, a Palestinian official said.

Mr. Abu Rudeina said Tuesday the Palestinians "were studying U.S. ideas," but gave no details.

Mr. Netanyahu's government continues to insist the Palestinians meet a long list of pre-conditions before it will conduct a pullback and have demanded the Palestinians forgo a later stage of redeployment due later this year under self-rule accords.

Algerian troops kill 70 rebels, 15 civilians slain in road attack

PARIS (R) — Algerian security forces have killed 70 suspected rebels in operations across the country and 15 civilians were slain in a road attack, security sources and newspapers reported Tuesday.

Government forces said "terrorists" killed 15 civilians on Monday on a road in Ain Djedje area in the western province of Tlemcen, 400 kilometres from the capital, Algiers.

The security forces, in a statement issued late Monday night on the official Algerian news agency APS, said a "terrorist

group" — the term used by the authorities for rebels — killed the 15 civilians as they were travelling in three vehicles. It gave no more details.

In the neighbouring province of Mascara, troops had killed 36 rebels over the past four days and were besieging up to 50 more guerrillas, said Al Khabar newspaper.

Thirty-four rebels, including 10 in one village called Amarchia, south of Algiers, had also been killed in other military operations in the same period, said Al Khabar and

La Tribune.

Al Khabar said tanks bombarded Amarchia and troops then moved in to take over the area, which the rebels had turned into a base after forcing residents to leave last June.

The newspaper said the 10 rebels who were killed on Monday were members of a group who massacred 131 villagers in the nearby hamlet of Sidi Hammed early in January.

Government troops have killed more than 100 rebels recently in operations throughout Algeria following a spate of mas-

sacres of civilians, according to local newspapers.

About 1,200 civilians died in massacres between Christmas and the end of the Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan last week.

The government blamed Islamist rebels for the carnage.

According to Western estimates, more than 65,000 people, including rebels, civilians and security force members, have died in Algeria since early 1992, when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.



HOUSE DEMOLISHED: An Israeli policeman pushes Raed Samhan away as an Israeli bulldozer demolishes his family's house Tuesday in the West Bank village of Ras Karakar. The Israelis claimed Mr. Samhan's house was demolished because it was built without a building licence (Reuters photo)

Top Turkish general visits Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The commander of Turkey's land forces began a four-day visit to Israel on Tuesday that underscored deepening defence ties between the two Middle Eastern military powers.

Israeli defence analysts said discussions on the crisis with Iraq were bound to figure in the visit by Turkish General Huseyin Kivrikoglu, though the timing of his trip was coincidental.

Gen. Kivrikoglu is scheduled to hold talks with Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Chief of Staff Amnon Shahak, Israeli military sources said.

He is also due to visit the Israeli army ground forces command, its technology and logistics branch and the air force, and will tour the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial.

Recent close ties between the Jewish state and NATO member Turkey, overwhelmingly Muslim but officially secular, have alarmed many Arab states.

The two countries held their first joint naval exer-

cises with the United States in the eastern Mediterranean last month.

Iraq, Iran and Syria condemned the drills, in which the participants rehearsed search and rescue procedures, as a threat to regional security.

A military accord between Israel and Turkey in 1996 allowed Israeli air force planes to train in Turkish airspace and opened the door to lucrative arms deals that could top \$1 billion.

Israel is already upgrading Turkey's two squadrons of F-4 fighter planes and is bidding for other modernisation projects.

The Turkish news agency Anatolia said on Monday that Gen. Kivrikoglu's visit would also involve discussions on a possible Turkish purchase of Israeli Merkava tanks.

Turkish and other newspapers have reported negotiations for the joint manufacture of as many as 1,000 Merkava Mark III tanks and an advanced version of the Israeli Pop-eye air-to-ground missile.

Efraim Inbar, an Israeli strategic affairs analyst, said he expected assessments of the crisis with Iraq to figure in Gen. Kivrikoglu's talks "as part of the ongoing strategic dialogue."

"To some extent we have differing views. The Israelis hack the Americans while Turkey is trying to play some mediating role," Mr. Inbar said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem is expected to travel to Baghdad on Wednesday for talks with the Iraqi leadership on the crisis with Washington over U.N. arms inspections.

The United States has warned Baghdad it is prepared to unleash a military strike from a force of 30 ships and 300 warplanes if Iraq does not provide unrestricted access to weapons inspectors.

Turkey backed the U.S.-led coalition that drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war, but it has since complained of huge financial losses as a result of U.N. sanctions on Baghdad.

Israel arrests 22 suspected Islamic militants

BETHLEHEM (APF) — The Israeli army arrested 22 Palestinians during Muslim holidays over the past four days for suspected links to Islamist groups, a Palestinian security official said Tuesday.

Most of the 22 were arrested at Israeli checkpoints around the West Bank towns of Ramallah and Bethlehem as they travelled for family visits during the four-day 'Eid al-Fitr, which ended the Holy Month of Ramadan, the official told AFP.

They were seized on suspicion of belonging to the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) or Islamic Jihad, said the official, a member of the Palestinian security liaison with the Israeli army, who asked not to be named.

Israel has arrested hundreds of Palestinians on suspicion of links to Islamist groups since two Hamas suicide bombings in Jerusalem in July and September which killed 21 Israelis.

Hamas and the smaller Jihad group have rejected Palestinian self-rule accords with Israel and have conducted a campaign of violence which has killed scores of Israelis since 1994.

Iranian official begins visit to Syria, Lebanon

DAMASCUS (AP) — Iran's parliament speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, arrived here Tuesday to discuss developments in the region.

Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency said Mr. Nateq-Nouri would remain in Syria for three days and then visit Lebanon for two days.

Mr. Nateq-Nouri will discuss economic issues

with Syrian and Lebanese officials as well as the crisis between Iraq and the United Nations over U.N. weapons inspections.

"We condemn U.S. military intervention... Any military step against Iraq is rejected and unreasonable," Mr. Nateq-Nouri told reporters here.

He said he would talk with Syrian officials about setting up an inter-

parliamentary union for Islamic nations.

Iranian officials in Damascus said a number of economic agreements aimed at establishing joint projects in Syria will be signed during Mr. Nateq-Nouri's visit.

Iran has warm relations with Syria, which supported it during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

Iran backs Hizbollah,

the main Shiite Islamist guerrilla group fighting to oust Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

Shiites are a minority in most of the Arab world, where Sunni Muslims predominate, but they are the majority in Iran and the largest single religious sect in Lebanon. There are 1.2 million Shiites in Lebanon, and most Iranians are Shiites.

Arafat orders early release of activists jailed for involvement in bombings

GAZA CITY (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has ordered the early release of two activists jailed for involvement in a January 1995 bombing that killed 21 Israelis, Palestinian officials said Tuesday.

Aziz Shami and Omar Shalah were convicted in a Palestinian military court in April 1995 for planning and involvement in a suicide bombing at a hitchhiking post for Israeli soldiers north of Tel Aviv.

Palestinian Prison

Authority Chief Hamdi Rifi said the two men — members of Islamic Jihad — were included on a list of 31 prisoners Mr. Arafat was granting pardons or early releases to as part of festivities for the Muslim 'Eid, which marks the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Shami will be released next year, after serving four years of his 15-year sentence. Shalah will be released in four months, after serving three years of his 25-year sentence, his

family said.

There was no official explanation for the early releases. Palestinian human rights activist Eyad Sarraj said the men had been wrongly charged and were innocent of the bombing. He said another Palestinian man held by Israel is considered to be behind the bombing and not these two.

The two will not be released immediately because they are still serving time for their membership in Islamic Jihad.

'Traitor,' 'murderer' spray-painted on Rabin memorial

TEL AVIV (AP) — Vandals spray-painted "Rabin is a traitor, Rabin is a murderer," on a Jerusalem memorial to slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on

Tuesday, and a militant Jewish group claimed responsibility for the act.

Rabin was assassinated at a November 1995 peace rally in Tel Aviv

by a Jewish extremist.

The outlawed anti-Arab group Kach claimed responsibility for the vandalism, saying it was in retaliation for parliament plans to

relocate the grave of Baruch Goldstein, a Jewish West Bank settler and Kach supporter who massacred 29 Muslim worshippers at a Hebron mosque in 1994.

Goldstein's grave, in a park in the Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron, has become a magnet for right-wing extremists who consider him a hero.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 Mr. Bogus
16:30 French Cartoon Films
17:00 Ashuaia
18:00 Children's Programme — The Finder
18:30 Drama — Neighbours
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Doc. — E-M6
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Campus Cops
20:00 Traces of Guilt
21:00 Drama — Kung Fu
22:00 News in English
22:30 Mini-series
23:59 Country Music

PRAYER TIMES

05:05 Fajr
06:24 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:49 Dhuhr
14:49 'Asr
17:15 Maghreb
18:34 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifelh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be fine and warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman 06/16
Aqaba 10/23
Deserts 05/18

Jordan Valley 09/21

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 18, Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Mazen Nballi 830435

Dr. Fayed Dabbas 759155

Dr. Adnan Zaghoul 898140

Dr. Fakher Bilbeisi 552233

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 890280

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qann 281484

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Zuhour Al Qadi 906606

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre

813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6

Akith Maternity, 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mafhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 6672279

The Islamic, Abdali 66612637

Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:25 Damascus (RJ)

08:05 Larnaca (RJ)

08:35 Jeddah (RJ)

08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

16:50 Istanbul (RJ)

16:55 Riyadh (add) (RJ)

17:50 Brussels, Vienna (RJ)

18:10 Rome (RJ)

18:10 London, Berlin (RJ)

23:10 Beirut (RJ)

00:05 Cairo (RJ)

02:05 Dhahran (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

05:50 Bucharest (RO)

09:30 Cairo (MS)

10:15 Doha, Al Hudaidah (IY)

13:45 Khartoum (add) (RJ)

10:30 Jeddah (SV)

10:50 Kuwait (KU)

13:10 Tunis (TU)

13:25 Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

13:45 Khartoum (add) (GF)

15:05 Tel Aviv (LY)

15:05 Vienna (OS)

15:30 Algiers (AH)

16:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)

20:10 Beirut (ME)

21:10 Paris, Damascus (AF)

22:30 Athens (OA)

23:15 London (BA)

23:30 London, Beirut (BA)

23:35 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Wings (RW)

07:45 Aqaba (RW)

09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)

09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

17:20 Tel Aviv (RW)

18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)

21:20 Aqaba (RW)

Home News

Fire breaks out in Zarqa gas cylinder warehouse

AMMAN (J.T.) — A fire broke out late Monday night at a gas cylinder warehouse in the Zarqa governorate, destroying at least 500 of the nearly half million cylinders stored there, according to the Civil Defence Department (CDD) Tuesday.

A department official said the fire, which occurred in the Barrawi district about two kilometres south of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC), did not spread to adjacent warehouses and caused no casualties.

A spokesman for the JPRC, the owner and operator of the warehouse, said distribution of gas cylinders to the public will not be affected since the warehouse still contains a sufficient number of cylinders to meet any demand.

He noted that the stored cylinders are owned by 911 distribution agencies in the Zarqa area.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, called CDD Director General Theeh Maani to enquire about the situation and was reassured that the fire was contained and isolated from the rest of the gas cylinders and prevented from spreading to other nearby warehouses.

CDD officials said it took just one hour to control and extinguish the fire, which they said could have been caused by a negligent worker in the warehouse.

However, an investigation into the cause of the fire is still under way, they added.

Maj. General Maani said the CDD has created a special committee comprising the CDD, the Public Security Department, and officials from the office of the Zarqa governor to conduct the investigation.

Maj. Gen. Maani said CDD personnel were assisted in fighting the fire by local residents and concerned government departments.

Noor Al Hussein Foundation names new executive director

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) on Tuesday announced the appointment of Sima S. Bahous as the new NHF executive director.

According to an NHF press release, Dr. Bahous previously served with the NHF from 1986 to 1995 as communications consultant to Her Majesty Queen Noor and assistant to the executive director in the areas of family and community development and women empowerment.

She also directed the NHF health communications project in the areas of child, maternal and family health.

"Socio-economic development is entering a new era, with increased emphasis on sustainability, women and gender issues, and enterprise development," Dr. Bahous commented.

"Within this framework, NGOs in Jordan face particularly strong challenges to support the government in combating poverty and unemployment and improving the overall quality of life for Jordanians. I look forward to working with my colleagues at the NHF and our partners in meeting these needs," she added.

Prior to her appointment as NHF executive director, Dr. Bahous also worked with the UNICEF office in Amman and managed a joint World Health Organisation/NHF development project in Yemen, the announcement stated.

The NHF was established in 1985 by Royal Decree "to coordinate and oversee the many projects and programmes which Queen Noor has helped establish or which she personally supports in the fields of culture, education, social welfare, and human and community development," according to foundation sources.

Dr. Bahous succeeds Yasser Tal upon the completion of his assignment as interim director.



Sima S. Bahous

Women activists blast deputy for suggesting they stay at home

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian women activists have blasted a Jordanian deputy for suggesting that females should stay at home to raise their kids and clean the house while men go out to win the family's bread.

Lower House member Salameh Hiani suggested during a recent Parliament session that the country's 54,000 working women should quit their jobs and concentrate on raising the next generation to help advance the nation.

This will help the country's unemployed men find jobs, he argued.

Such views are often heard in a conservative male-dominated country where women suffer from inequalities in civil law, a raft of discriminatory legislation, legalised polygamy and "crimes of honour" — the murder of a woman by her family for suspected "dishonourable" activities.

But many female activists said his remarks would not jeopardise efforts to improve their lot, an idea backed by His Majesty King Hussein and others in circles of power.

"This is a backward move and backward thinking in trying to solve the unemployment problem," said Emily Naffa, a communist politician who failed to win a seat in the Nov. 4 elections, which produced an all-male Parliament.

Such an approach contradicted the Jordanian plan of creating equal opportunities for women in terms of job payment and promotion to reach decision-making positions.

"This contradicts life's simplest human rights, and also harms the cause of women and the efforts exerted towards that cause," Ms. Naffa told the Jordan Times.

"Women discover themselves in their jobs, because working broadens their capabilities and education and brings out their talents and qualifications."

But for Mr. Hiani, who represents the Balqa governorate in the 80-seat House, "a good mother raises a good child."

"This will not take place unless we provide women with the appropriate atmosphere for such a task."

In a speech during a five-day debate on the 1998 budget, which ended late last month, Mr. Hiani also stressed that women should never dream of gaining equal rights to men "because of their physical differences."

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," he said, quoting an old proverb. "Nurses and domestic helpers do not raise children the way mothers do."

Mr. Hiani also called for emancipating women "from their materialistic slavery."

"On the one hand, women have involved themselves in difficult living conditions and on the other hand, they are under pressure from housing of being equal to men."

Mr. Hiani, in his plan to limit the need for women to work, proposed that the government allocate a specific amount of money to every working woman's salary according to the number of daughters he supports and their ages.

Seventeen women candidates, including Toujan Faisal, Jordan's first and only woman member of Parliament, faced over 500 men in last year's November parliamentary elections and failed to win a single seat.

Ms. Faisal lost the seat she won in 1993 to former Ministry of Information Under-Secretary Nayef Mouda in the elections, which she said were rigged by the government.

A recent editorial that appeared in the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm lamented the lack of women parliamentarians.

"The Parliament with which we enter the 21st century is like our Parliaments from the 1950s and 1960s," mourned the newspaper.

"While we were supposed to be consolidating the place of women in Parliament... we have lost the single woman's voice," it added, referring to Mr. Faisal's election failure.

Jordan's elections, boycotted by Islamist-led opposition parties protesting what they said was an erosion of parliamentary authority, were dominated by pro-establishment male candidates with strong tribal affiliations.

Women are now organising to try and get the Jordanian government to adopt a 20 per cent quota to guarantee women representation in the next Parliament.

They are trying to collect signatures of one million people to underscore their demand.

The 40-seat Upper House (Senate), appointed by His Majesty King Hussein, has three women, while the government has one female minister and several under-secretaries.



Idolzer demolishes Samhan's house

Lebanon

main Shiite Islamic militia group fighting Israeli forces in northern Lebanon.

Shiites are a minority part of the Arab world, but they are the majority in Iran and the largest single religious group in Lebanon. There are 2 million Shiites in Lebanon, and most of them are Shiite.

Peace efforts

Mr. Hiani said that the support of the Lebanese Order of the extraordinary gas appreciation of the support for Lebanon.

Trade between Lebanon and Jordan reached \$3 million in 1996, the Beirut newspaper Al-Diyar reported Monday.

Mr. Menem will visit Egypt, where he is to inaugurate a nuclear reactor built with Argentine technology.

Memorial

Goldstein's grave, a park in the Kiryat settlement near Hebron, as become a magnet for right-wing extremists who consider him a hero.

- 30 ... New Delhi
- 00 ... Calcutta, Bangalore
- 00 ... Dhahran, Saudi
- 15 ... Dubai, Muscat
- 00 ... Sanat

Her Flights

- 35 ... Amsterdam
- 55 ... Bucharest
- 55 ... Larnaca
- 00 ... Beirut
- 25 ... London
- 30 ... Cairo
- 15 ... Al Hudaydah, Aden
- 00 ... Kuwait
- 10 ... Jerusalem
- 20 ... Sharjah
- 30 ... Khartoum
- 15 ... Bahrain
- 10 ... Tel Aviv
- 30 ... Doha
- 50 ... Amman
- 55 ... Damascus, Paris

Wings (RW)

- 45 ... Amman (Marka)
- 10 ... RW

Wings (RW)

- 15 ... Amman (Qal'at)
- 30 ... Amman (Qal'at)
- 45 ... Amman (Marka)

Wings (RW)

- 15 ... Tel Aviv
- 55 ... Amman (Qal'at)
- 50 ... Amman (Qal'at)

Algerian minister rejects reports of army's complicity in massacres as 'baseless'

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Algerian Culture and Communications Minister Hamrawi Habib on Tuesday rejected as "baseless" reports claiming that the Algerian army was responsible for some of the massacres in his country.

"These statements are aimed at justifying the barbaric acts of terrorists," he told reporters after talks with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

"These statements give hope to and boost the morale of terrorists at a time when all parties should support those trying to put an end to these acts," added Mr. Habib, who began a five-day visit to Jordan on Monday.

In an annual human rights report issued on Friday, the U.S. State Department claimed that up to 70,000 people had died since 1992 in the Algerian civil war. The report also blamed some of the killings on the government.

"Those who are committing terrorist acts to achieve their goals have now launched media campaigns to smear the reputation of the Algerian authorities, which were elected by the people," added Mr. Habib.

Algeria has said the actual death toll from the violence is 26,536, including both civilians and security forces.

In its report, the U.S. State Department stated that "the security forces carried out extra judicial killings, were responsible for numerous disappearances, [and] routinely tortured or otherwise abused detainees."

It called for a fact-finding mission to visit Algeria to investigate the massacres of civilians.

Mr. Habib said he wanted to brief Jordanian officials on the latest developments in Algeria and his government's efforts to put an end to "terrorist" massacres.

He said the annual meeting of the Jordanian-Algerian higher committee was scheduled to convene in Algiers during the first week of March, at which time both countries will discuss boosting bilateral trade and economic ties.

Mr. Habib said Algeria will attend any Arab summit to discuss the Middle East peace crisis and other regional developments.

"Such a meeting should be a chance for all Arabs to speak freely and put an end to their differences, because the challenges ahead are so great and the time is ripe to forget all our differences," the minister added.

On the standoff between Iraq and the United States over demands for unlimited access for arms inspectors, Mr. Habib said his country supports all efforts to reach a diplomatic solution and avoid a military confrontation.

"Algeria believes that it is necessary to spare Iraq from catastrophes and disasters, and our country supports all efforts that would contain the crisis," Mr. Habib said.

Meanwhile, Jordan and Algeria signed a cultural agreement stipulating the exchange of cultural experts.

The agreement, signed by Mr. Habib and his Jordanian counterpart Qassem Abu Ein, includes among other things holding exhibitions in the two capitals.



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Algerian Culture and Communications Minister Hamrawi Habib on Tuesday discuss recent developments in the Middle East (Petra photo)

Cabinet extends terms of five ambassadors

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Tuesday decided to grant one-year extensions to the terms of five ambassadors who have spent five consecutive years at their present posts.

During a regular session, the Cabinet extended the terms of Haidar Mahmoud to Tunisia, Farouq Qasrawi to Romania, Shaker Arabiyat to Bahrain and Louay Al Khashman to Indonesia.

The Cabinet also approved the formation of a delegation, to be headed by the director of the international organisations at the Foreign Ministry, to take part in a meeting by the committee of senior government officials and experts to be held at the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) headquarters in Jeddah from Feb. 10-13, in preparation for the OIC meeting in Doha from March 10-19.

The Cabinet endorsed Jordan's participation in the Cairo International Book Exhibition, which will be held in the Egyptian capital from Feb. 4-21.

It also approved the formation of a delegation, headed by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani Mulki, to the meetings of the Arab Economic and Social Council, and another to the Tourism Policy Options Conferences for 1998, which will be held in Cairo and Berlin on Feb. 5 and March 6, respectively. The latter delegation will be headed by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Bilalji.

The Cabinet also appointed Mahmoud Diab Salameh Majali as an original member of the customs appeals court.

Interior minister approves new political party

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid has announced his approval of the establishment of the Jordan Labour Party (JLP), which has been founded with 60 initial members.

In a statement released Tuesday, the minister said the new party, Jordan's 22nd, was approved in conformity with the provisions of the Political Parties Law and the country's Constitution and National Charter, and as part of the government's efforts to enhance democracy and political pluralism in the Kingdom.

Mr. Rashid was quoted last October by the local media as saying that his ministry was studying a new political parties law to replace the existing 1992 law in order to accommodate political developments and the requirements of the next century.

The minister said the new draft law would deal with loopholes in the present law, primarily the question of the minimum number of founding members of a party, which at present stands at 50.

According to the minister's announcement, the new party will seek to enhance security and stability through respecting and abiding by existing laws, give due attention to the industrial and agricultural sectors, support measures to deal with unemployment, and back efforts to promote the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the party will strive to safeguard women's constitutional rights, give due attention to the youth sector and the environment, fight monopolies, encourage voluntary work, help develop Jordan's educational system, and will be especially concerned with helping the handicapped and promoting life in the rural districts of Jordan, the statement added.

The party, whose founding members represent people from walks of life ranging from school teachers, government employees and housewives, will hold its first congress and appoint its secretary general at a time to be announced later.

Japanese ambassador-designate pledges to continue efforts to bolster bilateral relations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Japan's newly appointed ambassador-designate to Jordan, Kouichi Matsumoto, on Tuesday said he will pursue the efforts of his predecessors to bolster Jordanian-Japanese relations, particularly in economic fields.

Mr. Matsumoto, who is due to arrive in Amman on Wednesday to assume his new post, told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, in Tokyo that Japan will maintain its support for Jordan.

He added that the Kingdom is a key player in the peace process and has a very significant geographic location and political status in the Middle East.

Japan's economic cooperation with Jordan conforms to the main principles included in Japan's charter for development aid, Mr. Matsumoto said, adding that his country seeks to promote economic ties and back the peace process.

Noting that Jordan enjoys stability and security, Mr. Matsumoto said he plans to encourage Japanese tourist groups to visit the Kingdom's archaeological sites, particularly the ancient Nabataean city of Petra.

Stating that the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has conducted studies on promoting Jordan's tourism industry, the ambassador-designate said he will exert efforts towards finalising legal procedures for organising direct flights between Jordan and Japan.

According to Mr. Matsumoto, Japan will continue to provide technical and economic aid to Jordan because Jordan is directly involved in the peace process, and is contributing to establishing stability in the region and conducting democratic and economic reforms.

Japan offers the greatest amount of development aid to Egypt, followed by Turkey, said the ambassador-designate, but Jordan receives the largest amount of Japan's aid in per capita terms.

He noted that a senior Japanese official who visited Jordan recently has submitted a report to Tokyo recommending increased economic aid to the Kingdom.

Mr. Matsumoto said he did not believe that the current recession in Japan will adversely affect Tokyo's aid to Jordan.

Mr. Matsumoto is succeeding Takayuki Kimura, who ended his tour of duty last month.

New telephone exchange part of national overhaul — JTC

AMMAN (Petra) — The new Abdali telephone exchange went into operation at the beginning of this month as part of an overhaul of the national telecommunications system in Jordan, according to an official from the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC).

Mamoun Balqar, JTC director general, Monday said that with the inauguration of the new exchange, which has a 40,000-line capacity, the JTC has introduced changes increasing the previous six-digit numbers to seven.

Mr. Balqar said the number five has been added to all numbers starting from the left with 66, 67, 68, 69 or 60. All telephone numbers starting from the left with 70 have been changed to 562.

According to Mr. Balqar, the new JD2 million telephone exchange has made more telephone lines available for the public in general and citizens living in the Abdali district in particular.

According to the JTC, the Abdali exchange has affected the following districts: Jabal Hussein, Jabal Nuzha, Tla'a Al Ali, the University of Jordan, Wasfi Al Tal (Gardens) Street and the Ministry of Interior and Firas circles.

Israel launches anti-panic campaign over Iraqi threat

(Continued from page 1)

Interior ministry officials said Tuesday that large numbers of Israelis were also renewing their passports so they could flee abroad if the crisis with Iraq deepens.

Last Monday Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Mordechai issued a joint statement announcing that the government would begin providing fuller information on both the reality of the Iraqi threat and measures being taken to protect the public.

Launching the campaign, top military brass held a press conference in Tel Aviv Tuesday morning to explain that while Iraq has some non-conventional warheads and a few missile launchers, it was not believed to have the capability to strike Israel.

The government also released \$68 million to purchase additional gas masks and produce antidotes and antibiotics against the germ and chemical agents believed to be in Baghdad's arsenal, Israel Radio said.

Opposition members of parliament had accused Mr. Netanyahu of exploiting the crisis atmosphere to divert attention from the stalled Palestinian peace negotiations and justify his hard line towards an Arab world he views as hostile.

Mr. Netanyahu fed such concern in a speech Monday in which he said, "I think what is happening in the Gulf these days reminds us exactly of the kind of a Middle East we live in."

Israel "can be attacked with missiles, that we know, but we also know that we have a capability of reaction and deterrence everyone should take into consideration," he said.

"The crisis with Iraq fell into Netanyahu's lap like a ripe fruit and he is exploiting it to avoid reaching tough decisions regarding troop withdrawals" from the West Bank, said Yossi Katz, a member of parliament for the Labour Party.

A months-long U.S. effort to revive Israeli-Palestinian negotiations hit a brick wall last week when U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright failed to convince Mr. Netanyahu to press ahead with the troop pull-backs.

But independent analysts said the government's hesitation had more to do with confusion than political design.

"It's really just a question of being initially confused as to how to deal with the crisis," said Mark Heller of the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv.

"Netanyahu had to figure out how to walk the fine line between reassuring the public and trying to send some deterrent message to Iraq," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent visits Armed Forces headquarters
AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday visited the Armed Forces headquarters, where he was received by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Miri Kaabneh and his senior assistants and Commander of the Special Operations Forces His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah. The Regent and Field Marshal Kaabneh discussed issues of concern to the Jordan Armed Forces.

Badran tours Irbid, Azmi Al Mufri refugee camps
AMMAN (Petra) — Department of Palestinian Affairs Director General Ibrahim Badran on Tuesday toured the Irbid and Azmi Al Mufri refugee camps, where he and the camps' improvement committees discussed means of improving and developing the level of services provided to residents. Dr. Badran visited the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) health centres, youth clubs and the rehabilitation centres for handicapped persons in Azmi Al Mufri camp. Dr. Badran also met with Irbid Governor Qutub Majali, who briefed him on the conditions of the camps in the Irbid governorate and efforts to provide the best services for camp residents.

what's going on

FILMS
* Children's film "Moonlight" at the British Council, Jabal Amman, at 5:00 p.m.
* "Colour and Space" on artist Gotthard Gronber at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 5:30 p.m.
EXHIBITIONS
* Valentine's Day bazaar at Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra Street (Tel. 699141/2), until Feb. 14.
* Private collection of Mamdouh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until March 5 (Tel. 643251). Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."
* "History of Cartoon Drawings" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Feb. 26.
* Works by about a hundred artists from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan at Hamamirah Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Feb. 20 (Tel. 5536098).

Prince Charles arrives in Sri Lanka amid heightened security

COLOMBO (AFP) — Britain's Prince Charles arrived in Sri Lanka Tuesday amid unprecedented security to be the main guest at the country's celebrations for 50th anniversary of independence, witnesses said.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar and two other senior ministers Ratnasiri Wickremunayake and Mangala Samaraweera welcomed Prince Charles to this former British colony.

The prince wearing a grey business suit stepped off a chartered jet flying the royal flag to be greeted by a 21-gun army salute at the Bandaranaike International Airport guarded by hundreds of elite troops.

He was given a garland of purple orchid flowers by a Sri Lankan school girl as a sign of welcome.

An airforce guard of hon-

our then presented arms while the airforce band played both national anthems during the brief but meticulously carried out ceremony.

The prince then walked down a receiving line of VIPs and signed the "golden book" at the airport which is named after President Kumaratunga's assassinated prime minister father Solomon Bandaranaike.

Black-uniformed commandos armed with AK-47 assault rifles ringed the airport in an unprecedented security operation to guard the visiting royal amid fears of Tamil Tiger guerrilla attacks.

The air force took over security at the airport last week as part of tight measures to protect it against bombing. A Tamil rebel van bomb exploded at the airport car park in June 1995

but failed to cause any damage.

Red-jacketed military police escorted Prince Charles to inaugurate a nearby garment factory which has investments from Britain's Courtaulds Textiles at Minuwangoda, a lush coconut growing area.

Police lined the 35-kilometre road from the airport to the city centre and Prince Charles was due to visit a Buddhist temple before entering the capital where he will be hosted to dinner by the president.

The temple known as the Kelaniya Rajamaha Vihara is believed by Buddhists to be one of three places in Sri Lanka visited by Buddha himself. Kelaniya is a suburb of Colombo also known for its pottery.

The route taken by the visiting royal was closed for traffic several hours in

advance because the authorities feared attacks from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas.

The government was forced to hurriedly shift the main independence day celebrations from the historic hill resort of Kandy, 112 kilometres east of here, after the Jan. 25 truck bombing there blamed on the Tigers.

Sixteen people were killed in the suicide truck bombing that devastated Kandy's show-piece, the 16th century Buddhist temple where Prince Charles was due to attend a service Wednesday.

A civic reception for Prince Charles by the Colombo Municipal Council before his departure Thursday was cancelled because of fears expressed by his advance security guard, officials said.



Britain's Prince Charles is presented with a garland by a little girl on arrival at the airport in Sri Lanka where he is to participate in a celebration to mark the country's 50th anniversary of independence (Reuters photo)

Armenian president faces crisis as supporters quit

YEREVAN (R) — Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan was in deep political trouble Tuesday after key supporters abandoned him, apparently over a territorial dispute with neighbouring Azerbaijan.

Mr. Ter-Petrosyan's foreign minister, Alexander Arzumanyan, and central bank chief Bagrat Asatryan resigned Monday in the latest tremor to shake a government split over policy on the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The ruling Respublika bloc has also divided and several members have left to join the pro-Karabakh Yerkrapa (volunteer) faction.

Vano Siradegyan has also quit as mayor of the capital, Yerevan. It was not immediately clear if he was resigning his other post as leader of Ter-Petrosyan's Armenian national movement party, the largest party in the Respublika bloc.

The presidential press service said Monday the resignations had been accepted but a Ter-Petrosyan official denied this Tuesday.

No official reasons for the resignations were given. But political observers said they were related to a rift between Mr. Ter-Petrosyan and Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan over the 10-year conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The resignations are connected with (Karabakh), said Avtur Bagdasaryan, head of the Armenian Political Scientists' Union.

"The political situation is complicated and tense," Nagorno-Karabakh, populated mostly by Christian Armenians, broke away from the control of predominantly Muslim Azerbaijan in the 1980s when Armenia and Azerbaijan were still part of the Soviet Union.

The Karabakh Armenians demanded they be removed from Azerbaijan's rule and be allowed to join Armenia. Later they declared independence as a step to eventual union with Armenia.

Thousands of people were killed in fighting between Azeris and Armenians before a fragile 1994 ceasefire came into effect.

Mr. Ter-Petrosyan has urged concessions in the dispute, saying they could help Armenia repair its devastated economy and avoid international isolation. Mr. Kocharyan accuses him of making too many concessions.

Mr. Kocharyan has the political backing of powerful Defence Minister Vazgen Sargsyan, but Mr. Sargsyan denied recently that the army had any intentions of meddling in politics.

Yielding to international pressure, Mr. Ter-Petrosyan said last year Karabakh would probably have to settle for an arrangement in which it preserves its de facto independence from Azerbaijan while technically remaining part of it, at least on paper.

Under the plan, worked out by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, ethnic Armenians would give up Azeri lands they conquered outside Karabakh, allowing peacekeepers to control the area whose formal status would be resolved later.

Mr. Kocharyan and his supporters say the plan does not guarantee Karabakh's security. Azerbaijan has accepted the proposals.

The unrecognised Karabakh government, which depends greatly on Yerevan for support and sees Mr. Kocharyan as its advocate there, has rejected the OSCE plan supported by Mr. Ter-Petrosyan.

Dissident accuses Chinese officials of distorting human rights record

BEIJING (AFP) — Outspoken Chinese dissident Qin Yongmin accused his nation's officials Tuesday of distorting its human rights record in the face of U.S. criticism.

"Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said that the U.S. government has a double standard on human rights, but the Chinese government has multiple standards on human rights," Mr. Qin said in a telephone interview.

"There are different standards if you are famous or if you are unknown and many other criteria," he added.

Mr. Zhu reacted angrily Monday to the 1997 U.S. State Department report on China's human rights, saying it distorted facts.

"The report distorts facts while pointing a finger at the Chinese government. The U.S. government should respect facts and stop using human rights as an excuse to interfere in China's internal affairs," he said.

Mr. Qin said he agreed in principle with the U.S. report, which noted some overall improvements in the situation, but warned that these improvements were only due to the "tide of history."

"Improvements in human rights in China are because of an increasingly strong economy which allows

Chinese people to have more freedom," he said.

"It was only under these conditions and the inevitable tide of history that President Jiang Zemin signed the U.N. Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in October," he added.

Mr. Qin was first sentenced in 1981 to eight years in a labour camp for taking part in the 1978-79 Democracy Wall movement.

He served a subsequent two-year term in a labour camp for writing a "Peace Charter" with other dissidents in 1994, but has refused to remain silent. On Dec. 22, Mr. Qin called for the creation of free labour unions within the state sector to help cope with the radical restructuring of unwieldy state enterprises.

Police tried to force him to leave the country, but he resisted and has continued to speak out in favour of a freer society.

On Jan. 29, police in Wuhan detained him for 12 hours after he attempted to board a train to Beijing to see his daughter for the Lunar New Year festival.

But he spoke out again on Jan. 31, calling for major political reform to initiate moves towards freedom of the press, free trade unions and a multi-party electoral system.

Philippines plane crashed into mountain, 30 dead, 15 survivors

CLAUVERIA. Philippines (AFP) — A missing Philippines airliner with 104 people on board had crashed into a mountain, with at least 15 survivors and 30 killed, airlines officials said Tuesday.

Rescuers were battling across formidable terrain in a race to save the lives of the seriously injured and to find more survivors from the Cebu Pacific Air DC-9 which slammed into Mount Sumagaya, officials and radio reports said.

The news came some 24 hours after the plane vanished Monday while on an internal flight from Manila to Cagayan de Oro on the southern island of Mindanao.

Air force pilots and journalists who flew over the wreck said they saw silver and white pieces of metal strewn across the mountain amid fallen trees in the thickly forested area.

Brown earth where the plane had apparently plowed into the ground was also visible, they said.

Cebu Pacific Air confirmed Tuesday the plane carrying 99 passengers and five crew had crashed.

"The positive sighting of flight 387 was confirmed this morning in the vicinity of Mount Sumagaya on the borderline of Gingoog and Claveria," the airline said in a statement.

"Initial reports reaching Cebu Pacific Air confirmed visual contact with 15 survivors," Airline senior Vice President Diego Garrido told a news briefing 30 people had been killed. There

was no immediate information about the fate of the other 59 people on board.

Earlier Radio Bombo Philippines, a private radio station which sent its own search team to the site, said injuries suffered by the 15 known survivors were serious.

Army Colonel Henry Singco of an army battalion in Cagayan de Oro said the wreckage was about 150 metres below the summit of the 2,234-metre mountain and the aircraft appeared to have exploded on impact.

A medical team from Cagayan de Oro and another team of medical experts from the post Makati Medical Centre in Manila were scheduled to be flown to the area later Tuesday, airline officials said.

They said the airline has activated a system for relatives of passengers who wish to go to Cagayan de Oro. About 40 relatives were closeted in a room at the airline office in Manila and were not allowed to speak with reporters.

Alex Ampuan had said earlier Tuesday he was waiting for his uncle who was aboard the plane. "My family is prepared, but I am still hoping they are still alive," he said.

Airline lawyer Levi Carbonell said they would try to avoid a situation where a class suit against the company would be filed.

"We will of course try to negotiate in good faith," he said, although the priority now was to take care of the dead, the survivors and their

relatives.

Search teams, armed with flashlights, had combed the area throughout the night, while an air operation was resumed at dawn after being called off at dusk Monday.

Other rescue volunteers, including from the Red Cross, were also waiting at the airport for instructions.

The aircraft had last made contact with ground control about 12 minutes before its scheduled landing time. Those on board were said to include a Japanese and Austrian national.

Air transportation officials said the pilot made an unscheduled stopover in the central city of Tacloban on Leyte Island, diverting it from its original flight path.

Mr. Garrido said the aircraft which crashed was 31 years old, and that the airline has eight others of this type in its fleet.

"These (planes) are maintained on a daily basis. They are getting checked every 24 hours," he told reporters. He also admitted that there had been some cancellation of bookings from passengers but otherwise "the airline is operating on schedule."

Cebu Pacific Air is owned by ethnic Chinese tycoon John Gokongwei, who has interests in banking, real estate, food, telecommunications and media.

It is among several airlines which emerged after Manila deregulated the industry in the early 1990s.

The plane was manufactured in 1967 and acquired from Air Canada in March 1997.

EU and U.S. remain deadlocked over Libya/Iran legislation

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) and United States remain at loggerheads over U.S. legislation that provides for sanctions against oil companies that invest in Iran and Libya, the European Commission said Tuesday after talks here.

"There was no breakthrough. Negotiations are continuing," a spokesman said after EU Trade Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan met U.S. Undersecretary Stuart Eizenstat.

The talks came the day after it emerged that the U.S. government is about to rule that three foreign petroleum companies which have concluded a joint energy deal with Iran are subject to sanctions.

Washington is, however, expected to delay imposing them for 90 days to give France's Total, Russia's Gazprom and Malaysia's state oil group Petronas time to amend or cancel their \$2 billion investment in gas fields off the Iranian coast.

A second 90-day delay is also an option under the U.S. legislation and even then U.S. President Bill Clinton can decide not to apply sanctions.

Under the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act, the U.S. government can punish countries investing more than \$20 million a year in the Iranian energy sector or more than \$40 million in Libya's.

The aim of the legislation is to prevent Iran and Libya from getting the foreign currency that could be used to acquire weapons of mass destruction, according to the U.S. The EU has long opposed the legislation and a similar law on trade with Cuba on the grounds that it extends U.S. jurisdiction to European companies operating outside the U.S.

The U.S. ruling on the energy deals is expected to be made public following British Prime Minister Tony Blair's Feb. 5-7 visit to the United States.

Police already on Clarke's trail, claims anti-child sex group

AUCKLAND (AFP) — Police in an undisclosed country have been investigating the alleged sexual activities of Sri Lanka-based science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke for the past year, an international anti-child prostitution group said Tuesday.

"They were following some leads given to them by somebody and they contacted us," Ron O'Grady, chairman of the anti-child prostitution and pornography group, Ecpat International, told AFP here.

He would not disclose which country the police were from, other than confirming it was not Sri Lanka. He said the initial inquiry to Ecpat had been made a year ago.

"They had been following it for a little while," Mr. O'Grady said.

He was not clear on whether the inquiry was to have led to criminal charges.

The police group was also not Interpol, although Mr. O'Grady said Ecpat had a close working relationship with the international police and shared information.

Mr. O'Grady said his organisation had been considering what to do about Mr. Clarke for nearly six years.

"It has been common knowledge in Sri Lanka for some time and our organisation has discussed Arthur C. Clarke for the last five or six years, whether there was something that could be done," Mr. O'Grady earlier told Radio New Zealand.

Britain's Sunday Mirror at the weekend quoted Mr. Clarke as saying he had sex with boys in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Clarke, aged 80, who wrote the acclaimed "2001: A Space Odyssey" and has lived

in Sri Lanka since 1956, was quoted by the Sunday Mirror as saying: "Once the boys have reached the age of puberty it is OK ... it doesn't do them any harm."

He reportedly added: "I think most of the damage comes from the fuss made by hysterical parents afterwards. If the kids don't mind, fair enough."

Mr. Clarke angrily denied the report, and requested that Buckingham Palace postpone a ceremony scheduled for later this week that was to have seen him invested as a knight of the British monarchy by Prince Charles.

The aged author said in a statement he was "against muckling about with small boys."

"There is no truth in the allegations. I have not been sexually active for more than 20 years," he said.

Mr. O'Grady said that under Sri Lankan law of the time, there was nothing illegal about sexual involvement with young people.

"You can not try him for anything he might have done in earlier years, so we couldn't get very far on that," Mr. O'Grady said.

"Effectively he has not broken the law, not the law in Sri Lanka, but he has broken a certain moral law," he said.

Mr. O'Grady said Mr. Clarke would not have been an obvious target for international exposure, but that changed when he agreed to receive a knighthood.

"If that had not happened I personally would not have had any involvement in it," Mr. O'Grady said.

N. Korean guard crosses border into South

SEOUL (AFP) — A North Korean guard Tuesday crossed the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) to the Southern side at the border town of Panmunjom, a United Nations Command (UNC) spokesman said.

"A KPA (Korean People's Army) member crossed the MDL this morning and it (the incident) is now under investigation," UNC spokesman Jim Coles said. He declined to elaborate on the incident.

Yonhap News Agency said the North Korean guard was identified as Corporal Byun Yong-Kwan who was wearing a North Korean guard's

uniform and carrying a handgun when he entered the South.

There was no shooting at the time of his crossing around 7:30 a.m. (2230 GMT, Monday), Yonhap said.

It is the first reported case of a North Korean soldier crossing into the South through Panmunjom since the Korean war, although six people have entered the South through the closely guarded area since the war ended in 1953.

The two Koreas have been locked in a tense truce since they signed an armistice agreement at Panmunjom in 1953.



Filipino relatives of the ill-fated Cebu Pacific DC-9 plane wait anxiously at the foot of Mount Sumagaya in southern Philippines (Reuters photo)

Teenage Indonesian maid forced by employers to eat dog droppings

SINGAPORE (AFP) — A 15-year-old Indonesian maid was twice forced by her employers, including a 13-year-old boy, to eat dog droppings for not cleaning up quickly after the dog, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

The maid detailed the

story Monday to a local court along with other forms of abuse that her employers heaped on her since she went to work for them last year, the Straits Times said.

One night in May, the employer's son "told me to eat the dog (droppings)

and he gave me three minutes to eat it. He said that if I did not, he would beat me," the maid, Hartati Ali Sodikun, told the court.

The incident was repeated a few days after. When she emerged from the toilet after washing her

mouth, the son asked her: "Was it delicious?", the report said.

The maid said she slept on old newspapers in the kitchen floor of the luxury apartment and that she was hardly fed. The mother and son would whack her with tennis rackets

when they found out she ate more bread than usual, the report added.

The boy pleaded guilty last month in a juvenile court for burning the maid with a hot iron, scalding her with boiling water and punching her in the forehead, the report said.

Britons offered holidays as U.S. bounty hunters

LONDON (AFP) — British holiday-makers are being offered the chance to spend their break as armed bounty hunters tracking down criminals in the United States, The Daily Telegraph said Tuesday.

Briton Ted Oliver, 47, who was a bounty hunter in

America for 10 years, said in the paper he intended to sell the holidays for £800 (\$1,300) per week this summer.

The Telegraph said tourists would be given black uniforms, bullet-proof vests and semi-automatic pistols. They would also be given a

course in martial arts and handcuffing techniques before accompanying Mr. Oliver on a man-hunt.

The paper added that flights, food and accommodation were not included in the deal, and the tourists would not receive a share of the bounty.

The last woman put to death in the United States was Velma Barfield. Convicted of killing her niece, she was executed by lethal injection on Nov. 1984 in North Carolina. Like Ms. Tucker, she said she had a religious conversion in prison.

Last year Texas put to death 37 men — the highest number since 1935, when 28 went to the now-abolished electric chair.

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Washington Watch

The scandal and the conspiracy

By Dr. James Zogby

THE SCANDAL that has been consuming Washington during the past ten days may well have been fed by a conspiracy. However, it is not the conspiracy widely believed by many in the Arab World and in parts of the Arab American community.

Since the story of the president's alleged affair with a White House employee broke in the midst of his meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and resulted in diverting significant attention from the peace process, it has appeared to some that the entire episode was a ploy engineered to weaken Clinton's efforts to pursue the peace process. This is what I have heard from friends, Arab intellectuals and policy and opinion makers, as well as a flood of callers to my office and my TV and radio shows.

It is only slightly ironic that coexisting with the view is the speculation that the president, faced with this scandal, may now be forced to take military action against Iraq in order to divert public attention from his domestic difficulties.

There is, however, little evidence to support either view. In fact, if there is any conspiracy at all, it may well be the one first lady Hillary Clinton suggested when she pointed to a five-year effort by "forces on the far right" that has been trying to destroy her husband's presidency.

Kenneth Starr, for example, the conservative Independent Counsel, is at the centre of Mrs. Clinton's allegation. He has, since assuming his post three years ago, spent over \$30 million (of taxpayer dollars) in a determined effort to charge Bill Clinton with a crime and have him removed from office. During this period, Starr has investigated the alleged scandal involving the Arkansas land-deal known as "Whitewater"; the allegation that Mrs. Clinton withheld information from his investigation into questionable billing practices by her old law firm; the allegation that a White House employee and friend of the Clinton's did not, as the police reported, commit suicide; alleged improprieties in the firing of employees of the White House travel office; and the improper use by a White House employee of secret FBI employment records of former Bush administration appointees. To date, despite extending his mandate well beyond its original purpose, to investigate "the Whitewater affair," Starr has been unable to find any offence with which to indict either the president or the first lady.

Far from ending his investigation, each failure has only prompted Starr to look for new offences. In the current alleged scandal, Starr has connected with the right-wing funded and supported Paula Jones sex-harassment suit against the president. This has prompted the first lady and other supporters of the president to charge that Starr is no longer investigating, but is pursuing a politically motivated vendetta to get the president.

In this vein, Starr's efforts do not stand alone. The National Taxpayer Union recently issued a study showing that in the past three years, the Congress has spent over \$190 million to investigate various charges against the White House. In all, there have been 20 Senate and House committees looking into a wide range of allegations.

Therefore, if there is a conspiracy to weaken the president, the obvious place to look, as the first lady suggests,

is to those who have been working so hard to destroy Clinton since he was elected.

Another observation that can be made that runs counter to the theory that the current White House scandal is the result of those out to damage the Middle East peace effort is that there has not been any observable change in U.S. Middle East policy.

Just this week, for example, the president issued an impressive Eid Al Fitr message to the Muslim World in which he reiterated his support for the Palestinian right "to live as a free people" — a formula which has been praised by the Palestinian leadership and roundly criticised by hardline Israelis. In the same greeting, the president responded affirmatively to the recent overture extended to the United States by Iranian President Khatami. Clinton spoke of U.S. "regret over the estrangement of our two nations" and praised Iran as "an important country with a rich and ancient heritage." He indicated that problems that currently exist between the United States and Iran "are not insurmountable" and welcomed "more exchanges between our peoples." These views will not be received positively by hardline supporters of Israel in the United States who are determined to reject any opening to Iran.

The effort to pursue the peace process will continue as well — but in much the same manner it has since Madrid. The United States has never used overt and decisive pressure against Israel — the kind that the Arab World would like to see used and the kind we know Israel deserves given its illegal and intransigent behaviour. However, this has nothing to do with the current scandal.

It is not necessary to mythologise about the hidden power of an all-powerful lobby to explain the absence of pressure on Israel — it is a function of real politics in the U.S. political system.

Moreover, in the case of Iraq, the administration's stance vis-a-vis with that country has been clear for months now. They have threatened to use force long before there was the hint of a scandal.

The real danger presented by the current scandal in Washington is not that it will change U.S. policy towards the peace process or that it will prompt the White House to use force against Iraq. The danger is that either Netanyahu or Saddam Hussein will misread the current situation and refuse to alter their policies — in the case of Netanyahu, resulting in the destruction of the peace process, and in the case of Saddam Hussein, bringing on a tragic confrontation that will only add to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

There are some disturbing, and some interesting, additional observations that can be made from the developments of the past ten days.

The real scandal of this period, I believe, has been the feeding frenzy that was generated by a wild and reckless U.S. media. First, it must be noted that the entire sordid story has been based on three sources: the illegally and secretly obtained tapes of Monica Lewinsky's communications with Linda Tripp; rumours about the cooties of the president's and Lewinsky's secret depositions in the Paula Jones lawsuit; and Washington-based gossip and unfounded stories.

It is evident from reading just the few published pages

of transcripts of the Lewinsky tapes that Tripp, although pretending to be her friend, was in fact maliciously coaxing her to say more in order to trap her into providing allegations against the president. A little-reported fact is that while these tapes remain the major source of the story of the scandal, only a few reporters from one magazine have actually heard them, and they have heard only one-tenth of them. All of the reporting that has occurred is based on rumours and allegations of what various reporters have been told are on those tapes. This is hardly responsible journalism.

The Washington press corps has behaved badly. They salivated over any sensational rumour and reported it as fact, subjecting American homes to unprecedented salaciousness for hours each day. The result of this non-stop barrage of sex-filled commentary has been to create a backlash against the press itself. Too many details of the story have already been proven to be false: there was no secret service agent who caught the president and Lewinsky; there is no stained dress; and Lewinsky didn't give the president the tie he wore at the 1997 State of the Union.

The president has vigorously denied the charges and his wife has joined in strongly supporting her husband. However, in Washington today, it has become a sign of sophistication to be cynical and disrespectful. It is not allegations about the president's character that has fed the disrespectful jokes made by popular TV comics. The same kinds of jokes are told by the same comics about Attorney General Janet Reno, about whom there are no allegations of impropriety.

The same media that last year interrupted the president's State of the Union message to report on the O.J. Simpson verdict, this year abandoned its coverage of the Middle East peace talks and the Pope's historic visit to Cuba in order to devote 10 to 12 hours a day to speculate on an alleged sex scandal. The preoccupation of the U.S. press with sex and sensationalism is the scandal we should be discussing.

The president told me last week that we needed to be patient and confident and that he needed to continue to focus on the work he was elected to carry out. He appears to be doing just that and the American people are responding affirmatively.

When the story first broke last week, according to one poll, the president was enjoying a high favourability rating of 60 per cent. After the first few days of non-stop press frenzy, his rating dropped to 56 per cent. The press began to boast that the president's support was eroding. But, following the State of the Union message, the president's rating has shot up to an unprecedented 67 per cent.

The polls also show, however, that the public is somewhat, and understandably, confused. On the one hand, they are uncertain about the charges against the president being fed an almost daily dose of scandal for ten days now. On the other hand, they like this president and respect his performance in leading the country. Moreover, in the end, as it has been in the past two elections and to Clinton's entire career in office, it appears that it is his performance as president that counts most with the public.

How solutions work

IF THE threat of a military strike against Iraqi targets materialises into the use of substantial forces, and all indications that it will, Jordan stands to suffer the second heaviest losses after Iraq. Not only could our oil supplies be disrupted, our substantial trade with Iraq would most certainly be damaged as well. More than that, a new military conflagration in the Gulf could force countless thousands of Iraqis, from the centre and the south, to flee across the border, further straining this country's limited capacity to cope with the influx of refugees.

This is why perhaps HRH Crown Prince Hassan found it necessary to warn against the consequences of escalation on the Iraqi front in an interview broadcast on Jordan Television two days ago.

But if this is not enough to convince the world of why Jordan would like a peaceful end to the current crisis between Iraq and the U.N., let the international community also be aware that the possible use of mass-destruction weapons, which is in fact at the heart of the standoff, could hurt us the most, especially since we are in no way prepared for the outbreak of chemical and biological wars in our neighbourhood.

While these genuine fears and trepidations justify fully Jordan's call for a diplomatic solution, His Majesty the King's and the Crown Prince's public statements on the situation over Iraq spell out clearly the terms upon which a way out of the potentially devastating mess can be found. Just as Jordan has seen faults with the way the U.S. has been handling the conflict with Iraq following the brutal invasion of Kuwait in 1990, we have also found the Iraqi leadership at fault in not doing enough to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people caused by the U.N. boycott.

The Saddam Hussein regime cannot claim that Iraq's sovereignty will be violated if the U.N. is allowed to inspect scores of presidential palaces, when in fact the whole country's sovereignty is threatened and impinged upon by the seven-year-old sanctions. Iraq has already covered a great distance in its cooperation with the U.N. inspection teams and it only has to satisfy the U.N. officials that it has no biological weapons left in its stockpile, a requirement that is shared by all countries in the region.

Meanwhile, the U.N. must build on its proposal to increase Iraq's oil-for-food programme to \$5 billion every six months by assuring Baghdad that once it satisfied the U.N. demands for the elimination of mass-destruction weapons, the crippling sanctions will be lifted altogether.

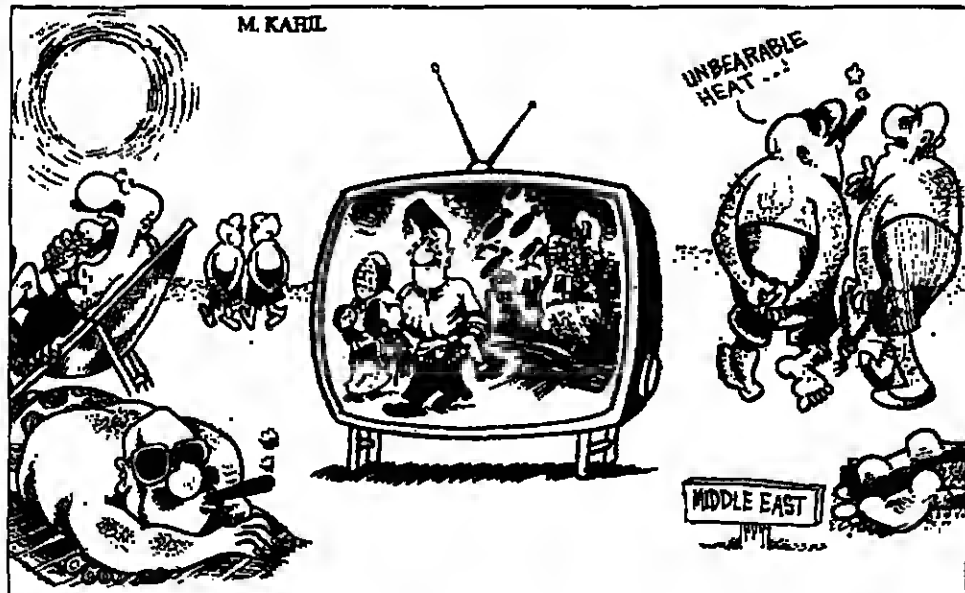
Tn that end we welcome all efforts made by Russia, the Europeans, Turkey, Iran and the Arab League to find a mutual formula acceptable to both Iraq and the Security Council. The U.S., for its part, can open a dialogue with Baghdad, just as it had done with other countries under similar circumstances, and achieve in the process a political breakthrough.

Jordan will not be the only country to gain from a happy ending to this crisis. The peoples of the region and the antagonists themselves will find in it some real benefits.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh addressed the potential dangers to Jordan if the U.S. launches a military strike on Iraq urging the government to take action at all levels and rally the Arabs to prevent such an aggression. Dr. Faneh said, if Iraq is again exposed to a military strike, then Jordan's oil supplies will be cut, forcing the Kingdom to purchase its oil needs from Saudi Arabia at a cost of \$600 million annually. In addition Jordan's exports to Iraq will be halted and the Kingdom will lose some \$300 million annually. Worst of all, according to Dr. Faneh, Jordan will be flooded by tens of thousands of refugees fleeing the scene of devastation or conflict in Iraq. Jordan is not an ally of Iraq or other states in the region and does not harbour enmity to others, but a military strike against Iraq will deal a devastating blow to the Jordanian economy and will cripple the country, he warned. For this reason, said the writer, the government should spare no effort in rallying Arab countries' support for an end to tension through diplomatic efforts via the Arab League. He said Jordan cannot stand by and watch the Iraqi nation annihilated and its own future ruined.

Al Dustour's Mohammad Daoud criticised the government for only verbally addressing the problems of incompetence in public administration offices and not taking any meaningful and effective steps to actually deal with the situation. Daoud claimed that in the past few months the government laid off some of its employees but hired others, and in both cases termination of people's work and the appointment of others was not based on the principle of improving the system since many of those given jobs were either relatives or friends of officials in high positions. The writer said the laid off employees increased the number of unemployed and complicated matters further. He said that only by opening the door to and encouraging investments can many of the country's ills be addressed. Furthermore, he said, overstuffed government departments can transfer their civil servants to another, and employees can be given training courses to better their performance. He said investments designed to improve the economy require a sound public administrative system.



LETTERS

Blinded by anger

To the editor:

IN REFERENCE to the letter headlined "Where is the honour" (Jordan Times, Jan. 25, 1998), I would like to applaud Tammy Summy on her views.

It is refreshing to see that there are people around who think the way she does.

Because we are living in an Arab society, I like Ms. Summy have come across people who tell stories about stabbing and shooting of girls and women to regain family honour, stories that go like this: "Did you hear about that girl? Her cousin shot her, and she really deserved it."

There certainly are other ways to resolve these problems. Deep in my heart, I never ever agreed to the concept of honour killing. I think it is so uncivilised and evil. Those who commit such crimes are blinded by their anger

and it's as if Satan is occupying their minds. But one day they will regret it so much.

Everybody makes mistakes — I realise that some are much bigger than others, but hey...look at Clinton!! And he is the MAN of the United States of America!! Like Ms. Summy said, life needs to be cherished, everyone needs to understand this.

It seems to be a norm to end your daughter's life when such a situation occurs; does it make those who take these lives feel macho or what? Well I know this, no matter how good it makes them feel, it will be very temporary. They will forever suffer a pain in their heart that will continuously cut like a knife...they will never be happy.

Reem Madanat
Long Beach, California
USA.

Israel shows contrasting approaches to 'threats' from Iraq, Iran

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — There has been a stark difference between the way Israel has been dealing publicly with the alleged threat of "weapons of mass destruction" that are or will imminently be in the possession of Iran and Iraq, the two Gulf countries straddling the world's largest concentration of oil and gas.

Analysts here have provided little plausible explanation about Israel's low-key reaction to the standoff with Iraq's Saddam Hussein over free access to U.N. weapons inspectors, a situation that is threatening to explode in military strikes on Iraq within "weeks," according to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who has been on a world trip "explaining" the uncompromising American position.

One of Israel's foremost experts on Iraq who served as adviser to several Israeli prime ministers, Amatzia Baram, said here recently that Israel feels it can do "nothing politically" about Iraq's non-conventional weapons programme.

Baram, a professor of Middle Eastern History at Haifa University and at present a visiting fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, says the Israeli authorities feel, "We can leave this job to the Americans and Brits."

In fact, he continued, "there is a school of thought in Israel that feels Israel is better off with Saddam Hussein in place because everybody knows he is dangerous but under control."

Israel has been assured during Alhright's stopover in Jerusalem that the United States would stand by Israel if it were threatened by an Iraqi attack, an assurance which allowed Israel to take a back seat to the looming showdown between Baghdad and Washington. The U.S. response would be "swift and forceful" if Iraq launched any missiles on Israel or any other country in the Middle East, she promised.

Subsequently, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu imposed a gag order on all cabinet members and senior officials on the situation with Iraq. The only exception was Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who, along with his subordinates, was said to have been discounting the likelihood of an Iraqi attack since in their opinion Iraq has no more than several missiles armed with non-conventional warheads.

This Israeli view of Iraq contrasts sharply with the one presented at a background briefing here on Iran's efforts to acquire long-range missiles from Russia by a senior aide who accompanied Netanyahu during last month's talks with President Clinton on reviving the comatose Middle East peace process.

"The Iranian programme could be completed in a matter of a year, plus or minus a few months," he warned.

The Israeli aide began by acknowledging that his country is at present part of an international effort aimed at containing proliferation in weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, but made no mention of Iraq or

his government's own nuclear capabilities. He only pointed to the efforts against Iran, which he described as a "country whose motivations and capabilities are... in a position to project power beyond its immediate vicinity and through the acquisition of strategic weapons."

If this happens it could be "catastrophic for the Middle East and regional stability," he declared, although one Israeli present at the briefing questioned all that hype about Iranian missiles since he thought it unlikely that they would attack Tel Aviv as propagated.

The approach that Israel undertook against this Iranian effort, he continued, was to seek the assistance of the United States in stopping the flow of Russian technology to Iran.

But if this trend continues, he added, and the effort to contain it fails, then "at the end of the day Israel's search and quest for stability and security may compel it... to devise and develop... capabilities which are now potentially present." He did not elaborate, but the impression was that he was referring to Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal.

The senior Israeli official, whose name could not be disclosed under the terms of the briefing, accused Russian firms of being in collusion with the Iranian authorities since mid-1996 in building that country's missile programme.

After early denials by the Russian government, the issue was taken up at the highest level of the U.S. and Russian governments,

He credited the threat of sanctions raised by the usually pro-Israeli American Congress and the efforts of U.S. Vice President Al Gore and President Clinton — in that order — who wrote a series of letters to the Russian leadership compelling the Russian leadership to change its mind.

"We thought that by mid-January the moment of truth would come because it would become clear whether the Russians are getting the message or not," he said.

Although the situation is not all that "unambiguous," he continued, the Russians have taken action to curtail the activities of the Russian firms. "However, we do not know and we are not sure whether this action, this intensive action by the Russian authorities, implies an earnest move to stop that cooperation (with the Iranians)."

Netanyahu's aide said it would take "a few more weeks" for Israel to make its own assessment — "and to make it known."

Russian participation and contributions are reported essential for the Iranian missile programme, he said, but "if this is arrested in time it could have a significant effect" in derailing the Iranian effort.

"We are in a race against time," he stressed, pointing to the large number of Russian firms that are involved in the effort. He pointed out that two engine testings were held last December. "I do not remember such intensity in the past which suggests that they could be accelerating the programme. In that case we cannot wait for long."

Jordanian-Iraqi joint economic committee to meet on Feb.15

By Mahmoud Masharqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN —The Jordanian-Iraqi joint economic committee is due to hold a meeting in Amman on Feb. 15 under the co-chairmanship of Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulki and his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Mahdi Saleh.

In a statement to the Jordan Times Tuesday, Dr.

Mulki said that he will extend an invitation to his Iraqi counterpart to come to the talks which, he said, will focus on renewing the Iraqi-Jordanian trade protocol. The 1997 protocol, which provides for Jordan to sell Iraq \$255 million worth of goods, has not been fully covered as Jordan has not received the full payment.

Dr. Mulki said he has requested the Iraqi charge d'affaires in Amman to speed up the payment of the remaining sums which are estimated at \$30 million.

Referring to the prospect of increasing the protocol to \$300 million worth of Jordanian goods to Iraq annually, Dr. Mulki said this question will be at the heart of the coming talks.

Dr. Mulki added that he

plans to visit Iraq shortly expressing hope that Jordanian firms will boost their exports to and maintain strong ties with the Iraqi markets.

Dr. Mulki assured the Jordanian public about the strategic reserves of foodstuffs at the disposal of the Ministry of Supply should a military confrontation occur between Iraq and the U.S.

He said "there is no cause for fear because the ministry's warehouses are full of supplies and the Port of Aqaba is always ready to

import foodstuffs."

The minister noted that Jordan's present wheat supplies are sufficient for six months, while sugar is enough for one year and barley and corn are sufficient for seven months.

The private sector merchants also have large quantities of basic foodstuffs in their warehouses that can last for a very long time, according to the minister.

The minister said that the private sector has concluded deals for importing 50,000 tonnes of wheat and

120,000 tonnes of barley which are due in the middle of next month.

Referring to Jordanian exports to Iraq under the U.N.-Iraqi oil-for-food accord, the minister indicated that Jordanian firms have won 69 contracts out of 109 to export goods to Iraq under the second memorandum of understanding with the U.N. together worth \$89.88 million.

He said that with this addition, the total value of Jordanian exports under the two memoranda amount to \$199.18 million.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have a very quick mind, but sometimes you get impatient. For the next several weeks, you'll have a little extra perseverance and a longer attention span. That will be helpful this afternoon, when you're trying to figure out a complicated puzzle involving money.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You might think some people like to do new things just because they're new. You might be right about that, too. You've got the best chance of getting your point across later on this evening. Don't even bother to argue before then.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You might get a nice travel opportunity. If you've saved up (unlikely), you could take a trip to some distant land. Otherwise, perhaps a person from a distant land will invite you to visit. Why don't you look around for somebody who's liable to do that, and make the suggestion?

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You're not really interested in taking care of people today, but if you can bring yourself to do it, you'll be glad you did. Actually, it will be a little bit easier than it has been before, once you get into the project. And besides, it looks like your boss or another older person may be insisting upon it.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Mercury goes into Aquarius this morning, which is in your solar Seventh House of partners. They'll be better with words than usual. In fact, you'll find it difficult to get a word in edgewise. Don't get into an argument with one of those people. You don't stand a chance.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Your motivation in life is to take care of others. One way you do this is by helping them stay organized. Today, you have the opportunity to do it for a co-worker. The only problem is that you're going to have to figure out how to do the job first. Don't worry. You'll have tomorrow to work on this project, too.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good time for you and your sweetheart to make plans for the future. You can set high goals this year, because you're willing to take risks to make them happen. Be careful not to spend too much, or you could be in for a huge case of buyer's remorse this afternoon.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) It may be hard to keep your mind on your job today, especially in the morning. If you can take today off to finish up a few things at home, do it. You'll probably have to go in this afternoon. By then you should have things well settled. This afternoon looks good for meetings with decision-makers.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) For the next few weeks, you'll have more patience with technical matters. So, if there's something you've been trying to fix, take another look at that manual. You rarely have the patience to do that, but today is an exception. Find a really good how-to book and curl up with it tonight.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Money becomes a major issue in your life. You may actually have more than you need, maybe even enough to start planning the vacation of your dreams. At the very least, it's a marvelous day to make the commitment. If you wait until tonight, somebody who'd like to go with you would love to help with that decision.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Today, you'll be quick, curious and eager to learn. You'll be fascinated by everything you lay eyes on. This should be an interesting few weeks, but this evening it could be a problem. You'll be dancing circles around someone who's trying to tell you what to do. Be patient.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Today marks the beginning of a complicated phase. You'll be doing paperwork in connection with big companies or educational institutions. You're a little stressed about money right now. That's OK. Everything will work out fine. Just take your time and do it right, so you don't have to do it over.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

JOB OPPORTUNITY



JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Amman Chamber of Industry is in the process of expanding its services to further support international cooperation and adapt to current local and global trends by establishing an industrial department and a small and medium sized enterprise department. To achieve this expansion, a number of qualified personnel are needed with the following requirements and qualifications:

Senior Industrial Engineer (Post 1)

Minimum of 5 years experience in international industrial affairs. Relevant masters degree would be an asset.

Senior Economic Expert (Post 2)

Minimum of 5 years experience in industrial management and administration. Expertise in business administration and market. Relevant masters degree would be an asset.

Environmental Engineer (Post 3)

Minimum of 3 years experience in environmental affairs. Knowledge of industrial and technological aspects of the environment. Master degree in a relevant field would be an asset.

Junior Assistant in International Trade (Post 4)

BA degree in Economics, Business Administration or Law. Knowledge of issues related to international law and trade agreements and regulations.

Computer Programmer and System Operator (Post 5)

BA in Computer Science. Knowledge of UNIX and Oracle is an asset.

All candidates must have:

- * An excellent command of Arabic and English.
- * Very good communication skills.
- * Advanced computer skills.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV) with a recent photo, in an envelope clearly marked with the specific post to which they wish to apply to the following address:

Recruitment Committee
The Amman Chamber of Industry
P.O. Box 1800
Amman 11118
Jordan

Deadline for receipt of applications is February 28, 1998.

Markets best placed to judge financial risks — Summers

DAVOS, Switzerland (AFP) — Free markets are crucial to any effort to control the risks of financial turmoil such as the Asian crisis in the future, U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers said here Sunday.

"We in the United States and the international community have to think through what the right mechanisms are for controlling these risks in the future," Mr. Summers told the World Economic Forum annual meeting here.

"The answer to that question cannot be an ever cascading provision of finance," he said.

"I don't know what all those answers are (but) they have to rely critically on the workings of free markets because it is only markets that can aggregate information in the most effective way," he said.

In assessing risk, he added, "The judgement of the many is much more likely to be satisfactory than the judgement of the few."

At the same time there has to be a proper framework of rules and informa-

tion "that allows the proper assessment of risk and the rational response to those risks," Mr. Summers said.

"If the problems that we face from Rwanda to Bosnia to Indonesia to AIDS to global warming are going to be sensibly addressed into the new millennium (will require) generous, outward looking America," Mr. Summers said.

He said the Asian financial crisis was the result of "a major change in sentiment (by investors) with potentially very large consequences for the economies of major nations and ultimately for the global economy."

The two main tasks now were to "put out the fire" and put mechanisms into place to ensure that it did not happen again, he said.

The immediate task is to ensure that the Asian economies "pursue the kinds of policies that can restore confidence," such as sound financial policies and financial systems "whose integrity are not subject to question."

After that comes the process, of finding mecha-

nisms for controlling such risks in the future, he said.

The United States wants to "respond strongly" on both fronts, Mr. Summers added.

But "what we are able to do abroad will depend on how strong we are here at home" and while the United States despite its material prosperity faces several social problems.

"It is not right" that a child born in New York has more chance of dying before reaching the age of five than a child in Shanghai, or that 2 per cent of the adult male population is in prison, he said.

"If our society is truly to function as an example" for the rest of the world, such issues must be addressed, he said.

Public trust in U.S. public institutions and government "has been eroding for many years," he said, but it must be restored "if we are to maintain the United States as an example and if we are to maintain the strength and the confidence to do what we need to do in the world of the 21st century."

Algeria sets aside land for farmers

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria continued Wednesday to liberalise its state-dominated economy, saying it would transfer 600,000 hectares of land to farmers in mountainous and plateau areas.

In a statement, the government said ministers decided to spend 72 billion dinars (\$1.14 billion) to finance the transfer to private hands of 48,000 parcels of land over three years.

It is the first time that Algeria — which has long had

one of the Arab World's most centrally-planned economies — has moved to give rural land to farmers. The effort should result in 498,000 jobs, notably among young people, the government said.

Despite six years of massacres, bomb attacks and murders blamed on Islamic militants, which have claimed well over 60,000 lives, the government has been pressing ahead with wholesale economic

reforms.

Supervised and funded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the slowly-advancing reforms — initiated in 1989 — also include privatisation of state-owned industries and services.

Western diplomats see the reforms as a way out of Algeria's nagging economic woes, which include 30 per cent unemployment, a chronic lack of housing and a costly need to import grain.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Long gone bird
- Cash a — over
- Profundity
- Dutch cheese
- Lotion substance
- Hawaiian ciao
- Neighbor of Wisconsin
- Drop feathers
- Windshield cleaner
- Three tracks
- Electromotive force unit
- Muslim weight
- Goddess of fruit
- "Sleepless in Seattle" star
- Nabokov heroine
- Director Kurosawa
- Tight closure
- Press
- Three tracks
- Skirt edges
- Lather
- Subsequently
- Japanese volcano
- Split hairs?
- Like some soil
- Great review
- Knight's backup
- Three tracks
- Window on a corbel
- Seaweed
- Champagne bucket
- Virtue
- Rank
- Draft classification
- Star
- Guessed figs.
- Twig home

DOWN

- Moore of "Ghost"
- Norse Zeus
- Blooker and Duryea
- Eat-anything types
- Anderson
- Overhead
- Singer Falano
- Allows to
- "Family Feud" host
- "Middemarch"
- Good repute
- Next
- Challenging
- God of thunder
- Refrain
- Syllables
- Turkish official
- Around 10 AM
- Oboist's buy
- Ship's movements
- Largesse recipient
- Seeing red
- Skim along smoothly
- Currently the style
- Ed who was Lou Grant
- Bus-driver Kramden
- Writer Waugh
- Cuban export
- Ms. Rogers St. John
- Washington sound
- Hair splitter
- "Dies"
- Tardy
- Mehmet or Muhammad
- Complexion damage
- Wine sediment
- Campus Greek house, briefly

Peanuts



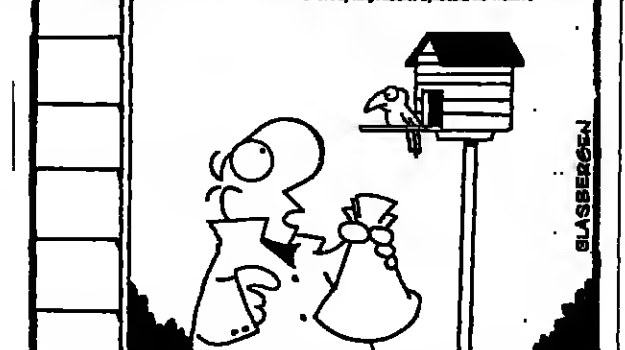
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I'll bring you food every day and you tell all the other birds to stay away from my windshield. Deal?"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four proper words.

PUPER
BLACE
NIDIOE
GLENET



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: FOYER YOUNG FINITE INVERT
Answer: An unexpected pit stop can become this — A TURN OFF

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

MAFICO chief cautions Jordanians against high expectation from EU partnership

"WE ARE deceiving ourselves when we overestimate the advantages of the Jordanian-European partnership. Our expectations that Europe will help Jordanian companies will also fail," Rashad Othman, the general manager of MAFICO (Al Mafrag Food Industries Company) said in an interview. He added that Europeans are the most demanding that foreign markets be opened while, at the same time, placing obstacles in the way of imports.

Noting that Jordanian companies are not all qualified to enter into real partnership with the Europeans, Mr. Othman said the partnership should depend on cost saving which is lacking in Jordan. Furthermore, he indicated, Jordanian industries should be considered as a base for exports by stressing the relative benefits in this regard.

For example, Mr. Othman explained, Jordanian industries are better poised than any European company to export to Saudi Arabia if we had the capability to manufacture a product and export it in accordance with previously-set standards. He stressed that we should revise our Jordanian manufacturing capabilities and specify the positive relative advantage and by concentrating on these two elements we will qualify to compete by lower cost and prices.

Mr. Othman praised the way followed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade towards developing skills and qualifications and giving the necessary means to improve quality but also urged the ministry to expedite reductions of customs on production inputs.

The MAFICO general manager spoke of many hindrances facing the food processing industry in Jordan especially the numerous parties responsible for issuing health certificates. Noting that such a procedure was involving the Institute of Standards and Specifications and the ministries of health and agriculture, Mr. Othman emphasized that only one entity should be specified to examine food products whether imported or being readied for export.

Mr. Othman stressed the importance of facilitating the procedures of export-oriented industries whether in the clearing stage or in speeding the entry of manufacturing needs such as cotton packages or metal cans. He said demands in this regard have been presented to successive governments but the subject until now is still under study.

"Competition does not wait as it seizes the opportunities wherever they are," he concluded (Al Arab Al Yawm).

Australian bank says now is the time to invest in Asia

MELBOURNE, Australia (AFP) — The ANZ Banking Group Ltd. has said it would pounce on cut-price acquisitions in Asia in the midst of the region's economic turmoil, which it maintained had a minimal impact on its earnings.

Asian markets had until recently been "both restrictive and expensive to enter," chief executive John McFarlane told the bank's annual general meeting.

"We now have a unique opportunity to take advantage of the opening of these markets to expand our presence in the region, principally through acquisition and joint venture," he said.

ANZ already had "informal approaches as the preferred partner, but such opportunities are still in the formative stage."

Mr. McFarlane's comments followed those from a number of executives in financial services companies in recent days who said they were looking to take advantage of cheaper assets in Asia following the turmoil there.

ANZ Chairman Charles Goode told the meeting that the crisis was expected to have only a relatively small effect on the

bank's profit in the year to June 1998.

However, he warned that scenario could change if the region's woes were to worsen and become more widespread.

Mr. Goode told ANZ shareholders the broader impact of the East Asian crisis on the quality of credit globally remained difficult to assess.

"Currently assets recognised as impaired throughout East Asia remain low," he said.

"However it is inevitable that impaired assets will increase and we expect as a result provisioning will be necessary," Mr. Goode added.

Mr. Goode said ANZ was on track for an increase in profit over the 1997-98 financial year.

"We expect that Australia, despite the problems in East Asia, will enjoy annual real growth of around three per cent for the next few years and for New Zealand it will be a little lower," he said.

"Although competition will maintain pressure on margins, we expect our bank will share in this growth and our major businesses are currently trading well."

Bank equity stakes aid Israeli firms' profits — study

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli banks contribute to the profitability and reduce the risk of industrial companies in which they hold a five per cent or greater stake, a study released by the Bank of Israel said.

The central bank attributed this to the ability of banks and the financial concerns they control, such as mutual and provident fund management companies, to provide management support and loans.

By contrast, fund managers not connected to a bank have no influence over the profitability and risk of their portfolio companies.

The report said this was because non-bank fund managers tended to focus on the average portfolio yield rather than on individual holdings.

Non-financial and private shareholders also contribute to their portfolio companies' profitability and risk, but to a lesser extent than the banks, the report concluded.

The Bank of Israel has in the past pressured the banks to reduce their non-bank holdings to reduce their influence over the economy.

Banking laws currently prohibit banks from holding more than 20 per cent of a non-bank company's equity.

Housing Bank imposes monthly commission on small savers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) will examine the legality of a new measure adopted by the Housing Bank which has imposed a monthly commission of one dinar on all accounts totalling less than JD100.

The new measure also applies to children's saving accounts at the Housing Bank which pays an interest of five per cent on savings in excess of JD1,000 and four per cent on savings less than JD1,000.

Despite the denial by the Housing Bank's Public Relations Director Mohammad Abu Zeid that the bank

has imposed such a commission, Housing Bank branches approached by Al Ra'i Arabic daily and the Jordan Times said they have received a circular requesting them to enforce the new measure.

The branches said they had already collected this commission from accounts with balances of less than JD100. While the Housing Bank argues that processing and servicing saving accounts of less than JD100 cost more than five dinars a month, other banking sources say banks usually cover any such differences from other transactions.

Kuwait Airways to be partially privatised

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The Kuwaiti government is planning to sell off 60 per cent of its national flag carrier, Kuwait Airways Corp. (KAC), the airline's managing director has said.

Ahmad Al Mishari added that the government's remaining 40 per cent stake would also be sold off "progressively" over time.

He told the official news agency KUNA that initial plans to offer 50 per cent for public sale and 10 per cent to KAC staff had been drawn up by the government-run Kuwait Investment Authority.

Mr. Mishari gave no timeframe for the sale, saying that he was waiting for a government response on

the "political, social and economic" aspects of the deal which has been under consideration for several years.

He said that for "strategic social reasons" the government wanted KAC to continue employing Kuwaitis, even though expatriate labour might turn out to be much cheaper.

KAC announced losses of \$115 million in 1995-96, and has yet to announce results for the year to June 1997.

The company blamed the losses on the cost of replacing aircraft destroyed by the 1990 Iraqi invasion of the emirate.

U.S. companies lose billions to foreign economic spies — report

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Companies based in the United States lose an estimated \$300 billion a year to foreign espionage, the Los Angeles Times has reported, citing FBI data.

The intelligence services of at least 23 countries — including Germany and China — regularly spy on U.S. firms, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) said.

"The odds are not favourable for any American company when they are targeted for clandestine action by some country's intelligence service," Larry Torrence, FBI deputy assistant director of national security, told the newspaper.

The losses are based on reports by U.S. companies of more than 1,100 documented incidents reported in a survey conducted by the American Society for Industrial Security. High technology companies are prime targets for economic espionage, according to the information.

Foreign intelligence services seek information on research and development strategies, manufacturing and marketing plans, and customer lists, the Times reported.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

| Major Currencies & Cross Rates | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | CAD | ITL | NLG | FRF |
| US Dollar | - | 1.8178 | 0.8090 | 1.4707 | 125.58 | 1.4526 | 1793.20 | 2.0484 | 6.0910 |
| DE Mark | 0.5501 | - | 0.3349 | 0.8088 | 66.29 | 0.7990 | 986.47 | 1.1271 | 3.3516 |
| GB Sterling | 1.6420 | 2.9863 | - | 2.4134 | 206.85 | 2.3892 | 2944.43 | 3.3631 | 10.0014 |
| CH Franc | 0.6799 | 123.57 | 0.4138 | - | 85.72 | 0.9876 | 1219.70 | 138.31 | 4.1410 |
| JP Yen | 0.0078 | 1.4412 | 0.4827 | 1.1657 | - | 1.1619 | 14.23 | 162.43 | 4.8309 |
| CA Dollar | 0.6884 | 1.2479 | 0.4186 | 1.0112 | 1.16 | - | 1231.81 | 1.4089 | 4.1821 |
| IT Lira | 0.0006 | 1.0127 | 0.3392 | 0.8018 | 1425.52 | 0.8095 | - | 11.41 | 3.3948 |
| NL Guilder | 0.4882 | 88.88 | 0.2971 | 71.77 | 61.48 | 0.7060 | 876.88 | - | 2.6734 |
| FR Franc | 0.1642 | 0.2982 | 0.0999 | 24.1203 | 20.87 | 0.2364 | 33.62 | 33.6200 | - |

| Middle Eastern Currencies | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Currency | USD | JOD | SAR | BAH | QAT | KUW | AED | LBP | EGP |
| US Dollar | - | 0.7090 | 3.7605 | 0.3770 | 3.6410 | 0.3062 | 3.6728 | 1629.00 | 3.4125 |
| Jordan Dinar | 1.4104 | - | 6.2898 | 0.8317 | 5.4364 | 0.4305 | 6.1903 | 2156.56 | 4.8121 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.2666 | 0.1890 | - | 0.1006 | 0.97 | 0.0814 | 0.98 | 407.88 | 0.9099 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 2.65 | 1.8807 | 9.3485 | - | 9.86 | 0.8096 | 8.74 | 4085.81 | 0.9020 |
| Qatar Dinar | 0.2746 | 0.1947 | 1.0301 | 1.0301 | - | 0.0838 | 1.01 | 415.94 | 0.9372 |
| Kuwait Dinar | 3.2763 | 2.3229 | 12.2879 | 1.2361 | 11.93 | - | 12.03 | 6008.50 | 0.9372 |
| Emirates Dinar | 0.2723 | 0.1930 | 1.0212 | 0.1028 | 0.9913 | 0.0831 | - | 418.30 | 0.9291 |
| Lebanese L1000 | 0.65 | 0.4637 | 2.4528 | 0.2486 | 2.3813 | 0.1986 | 2.4021 | - | 2.2319 |
| Egyptian | 0.2830 | 0.2078 | 1.0990 | 0.1105 | 1.0670 | 0.0894 | 1.0763 | 448.06 | - |

| Energy | | |
|----------|-------|----------|
| Obs. | Last | Previous |
| Brent | 15.18 | 15.43 |
| N. Texas | 16.73 | 17.04 |
| Bonny | 15.18 | 15.43 |
| Dubai | 13.40 | 14.77 |
| Utl Gas | 16.00 | 16.00 |

| Mid-East Currencies | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY |
| SA Riyal | 0.2666 | 0.4847 | 0.16238 | 0.35211 | 33.6225 |
| AE Dirham | 0.2723 | 0.49493 | 0.16882 | 0.4004 | 34.3336 |
| KW Dinar | 3.2763 | 6.95893 | 1.99521 | 4.81928 | 413.223 |
| BH Dinar | 0.3770 | 4.8218 | 1.01561 | 3.90016 | 334.448 |
| CY Pound | 1.8699 | 3.3975 | 1.1381 | 2.7475 | 235.688 |

| Currency Deposit Rates (Bid) | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|----------|----------|------|
| Period | -1 | -3 | -6 | -9 | -12 | Month | 3 Months | 6 Months | Year |
| USD | 6.50 | 6.50 | 6.50 | 6.50 | 6.71 | 7.34 | 7.41 | 7.41 | 7.37 |
| GBP | 7.34 | 7.41 | 7.41 | 7.41 | 7.37 | 0.43 | 0.43 | 0.50 | 0.34 |
| JPY | 0.43 | 0.43 | 0.50 | 0.34 | 0.61 | 3.25 | 3.40 | 3.50 | 3.66 |
| DEM | 3.25 | 3.40 | 3.50 | 3.66 | 3.81 | 3.41 | 3.48 | 3.58 | 3.64 |
| FRF | 3.41 | 3.48 | 3.58 | 3.64 | 3.88 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.28 | 1.26 |
| CHF | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.28 | 1.26 | 1.48 | 6.22 | 6.06 | 6.78 | 6.44 |
| ITL | 6.22 | 6.06 | 6.78 | 6.44 | 6.23 | | | | |

| Energy | | |
|------------------|--------|----------|
| Commodity | Last | Delivery |
| Coffee (\$/cibb) | 192.42 | Spot |
| Cocoa (\$/ton) | 1606 | Spot |
| Sugar (\$/ton) | 293.3 | Spot |
| Wheat (\$/ton) | 0 | Spot |
| Soya (\$/cibb) | 25.04 | Spot |
| Tea (std/kg) | 225 | Spot |
| Barley (\$/bsh) | 0 | Spot |
| Rice (\$/ton) | 400 | Spot |

| * JOD Cross Rates | | |
|-------------------|--------|--------|
| Currency | Buy | Sell |
| US Dollar | 0.708 | 0.710 |
| GB Sterling | 1.1645 | 1.1703 |
| DE Mark | 0.3896 | 0.3915 |
| CH Franc | 0.4806 | 0.483 |
| FR Franc | 0.1162 | 0.1168 |
| JP Yen | 0.8609 | 0.8636 |
| NL Guilder | 0.3467 | 0.3474 |
| IT Lira | 0.3945 | 0.3956 |

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

| AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| HOUSING BANK CENTER, AMMAN - SINETANI | | | | | | | | | | |
| TELEPHONE: 60711 / 60719 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 03/02/1998 | | | | | | | | | | |
| PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH | PAST 12 MONTHS LOW | COMPANY'S NAME | P / E | QTV. | NO. OF TRANS. | NO. OF SHARES | VALUE TRADED JD | OPEN PRICE | CLOSE PRICE | CHANGE |
| 346,000 | 250,000 | ARAB BANK | 15.1 | 1.22 | 13 | 1480 | 484350 | 329.00 | 328.00 | 1.00 |
| N 2,340 | 1,680 | JOR. NATIONAL BK. | 8 | 0.00 | 13 | 5000 | 8650 | 1.72 | 1.73 | .01* |
| S 2,540 | 1,400 | BANK OF JORDAN | 4.4 | 0.00 | 4 | 1350 | 1890 | 1.40 | 1.40 | - |
| S 2,680 | 1,650 | INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK. | 10.1 | 6.18 | 4 | 2500 | 4225 | 1.69 | 1.69 | - |
| S 970 | 620 | JOR. GUER. BANK | 4.1 | 10.14 | 12 | 15700 | 10390 | 1.66 | 1.69 | .03* |
| S 4,050 | 2,250 | JOR. ISLAMIC BANK | 11.9 | 4.10 | 8 | 3820 | 8485 | 2.35 | 2.34 | .01* |
| 1,620 | .870 | WEST. AL-HAL (SINETANI) | 8 | 16.67 | 1 | 100 | 90 | 0.90 | 0.90 | - |
| BANK SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | INDEX: 231.67 | INDEX: -0.21 | 57 | 29785 | | 518147 | | | |
| 2,950 | 2,700 | JORDAN INSURANCE | 11.6 | 5.56 | 1 | 1200 | 3240 | 2.70 | 2.70 | - |
| 2,120 | 1,590 | JOR. FRENCH INSUR. | 5.6 | 7.50 | 1 | 500 | 1000 | 2.04 | 2.00 | -.04 |
| INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | INDEX: 120.14 | INDEX: -0.20 | 2 | 1700 | | 4240 | | | |
| 2,050 | 1,550 | JOR. ELECTRIC PWR. | 9.8 | 4.95 | 84 | 57998 | 116645 | 2.01 | 2.02 | .01* |
| 1,550 | 930 | RATL. PORTFOLIO | 9 | 0.00 | 4 | 2650 | 2668 | 1.00 | 1.02 | .02* |
| 8,900 | 6,700 | ALRA'Y | 15.0 | 5.95 | 1 | 2000 | 16800 | 8.20 | 8.40 | .20* |
| 1,590 | 1,150 | HID. EAST HOTELS | 10.3 | 0.00 | 1 | 500 | 600 | 1.20 | 1.20 | - |
| 6,000 | 2,890 | ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC. | 10.1 | 0.00 | 3 | 3700 | 14199 | 3.85 | 3.85 | - |
| 1,050 | .740 | JORDAN EXPAT. INV. | 9 | 0.00 | 3 | 3500 | 2975 | 1.90 | .85 | -.05 |
| SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | INDEX: 116.94 | INDEX: +0.36 | 98 | 70248 | | 153887 | | | |
| 4,450 | 2,750 | JOR. CEMENT FACT. | 20.1 | 3.69 | 3 | 287 | 854 | 2.99 | 2.98 | .01* |
| 11,190 | 9,200 | JOR. PETROL. REFINERY | 10.0 | 8.64 | 16 | 1145 | 11787 | 10.31 | 10.29 | .02* |
| 1,330 | 1,330 | INDUSTRIAL COM. AG. | 9 | 0.00 | 3 | 381 | 509 | 1.36 | 1.34 | .02* |
| 7,350 | 5,800 | JOR. WASTE HILLS | 10.7 | 3.02 | 1 | 100 | 663 | 6.98 | 6.63 | .35* |
| 4,700 | 3,440 | ARAB PHARM. MANF. | 12.0 | 4.58 | 23 | 14596 | 63650 | 4.35 | 4.37 | .02* |
| 3,940 | 2,200 | JORDAN DAIRY | 9.4 | 0.00 | 1 | 100 | 280 | 2.80 | 2.80 | - |
| S 1,420 | 800 | RAJIA INDUSTRIES | 8.7 | 0.00 | 1 | 100 | 80 | 0.80 | 0.80 | - |
| 6,000 | 4,400 | JOR. ALDAMA OV. INV. | 14.0 | 4.39 | 3 | 10000 | 57000 | 5.70 | 5.70 | - |
| 620 | 440 | LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 9.1 | 0.00 | 6 | 2000 | 865 | 1.45 | 1.45 | - |
| 1,200 | 730 | ARAB PAPER COM. TRD. | 22.3 | 0.00 | 1 | 2300 | 1679 | 0.73 | 0.73 | - |
| 1,120 | 370 | INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 200 | 82 | 0.41 | 0.41 | - |
| 2,600 | 1,380 | UNIV. CHEM. INDUS. | 13.1 | 6.90 | 3 | 4400 | 6380 | 1.45 | 1.45 | - |
| 800 | 530 | JOR. SULPHO-CHEM. | 9 | 0.00 | 8 | 1150 | 1815 | 0.58 | 0.57 | .01* |
| 1,610 | 1,150 | ARAB PHARM. CHEM. | 15.1 | 5.93 | 1 | 250 | 295 | 1.19 | 1.18 | .01* |
| S 1,800 | 820 | UNIV. MODN. INDUS. | 12.6 | 1.26 | 18 | 9200 | 7544 | 0.82 | 0.82 | - |
| 1,410 | 890 | JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES | 9.8 | 13.60 | 8 | 2600 | 2621 | 1.11 | 1.17 | .06* |
| 950 | 810 | JOR. NEW CABLE CO. | 16.5 | 0.00 | 8 | 2900 | 2600 | 0.90 | 0.90 | - |
| 810 | 700 | JORDAN STEEL | 31.2 | 7.25 | 4 | 2050 | 1415 | 0.70 | 0.69 | .01* |
| 840 | 570 | HID. EAST COMPLEX | 7.9 | 15.63 | 20 | 165500 | 105755 | 0.61 | 0.64 | .03* |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | INDEX: 109.70 | INDEX: -0.14 | 129 | 222259 | | 265882 | | | |
| GRAND TOTAL | | INDEX: 165.82 | INDEX: -0.16 | 286 | 323992 | | 942156 | | | |
| PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 03/02/1998 | | | | | | | | | | |
| N 1,050 | .990 | EXPORT & P.H. BAK. 75% | 9 | 0.00 | 6 | 10900 | 8175 | .99 | 1.00 | .01* |
| .610 | .340 | JOR. TRADE FAC. | 9.9 | 0.00 | 9 | 23600 | 3720 | .37 | .37 | - |
| N 800 | .660 | UNION INV. 50% | 9 | 0.00 | 8 | 18500 | 3700 | .70 | .70 | - |
| N 1,000 | .360 | ARAB FIN. INV. CO. | 9 | 0.00 | 27 | 66150 | 36217 | .33 | .33 | .03* |
| N 1,000 | .720 | AL-SHAPO INV. CO. | 9 | 0.00 | 2 | 5100 | 4694 | .94 | .94 | - |
| .290 | .140 | JOR. INDUS. MATCH-JAMICO | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 5000 | 800 | .16 | .16 | - |
| N 1,200 | .500 | UNIV. CHEM. INDUS. 20% | 31.2 | 0.00 | 2 | 750 | 290 | .79 | .79 | .01* |
| N 750 | .380 | NATL. MOLT. ENG. MANCO | 9 | 0.00 | 50 | 166700 | 67118 | .42 | .40 | -.02* |
| N 1,200 | .890 | READY MIX CONCRETE | 14.1 | 0.00 | 6 | 8400 | 7391 | 1.11 | 1.17 | .06* |
| .670 | .580 | MIDREAST PHARM. 90% | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 1000 | 540 | .64 | .64 | - |
| N 730 | .550 | RAT. PHARM. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 500 | 355 | .71 | .71 | - |
| .470 | .240 | INDS. ENG. | 9 | 0.00 | 1 | 1400 | 70 | .27 | .28 | .01* |
| N 950 | .570 | ADVANCED PHARMA. 100% | 9 | 0.00 | 22 | 26566 | 7917 | .57 | .57 | - |
| N 1,000 | .660 | NAT. ALUMINIUM. 75% | 9.2 | 0.00 | 1 | 1000 | 567 | .67 | .67 | - |
| N 1,310 | 1,000 | NUTRIGRAN | 9 | 0.00 | 3 | 390 | 429 | 1.30 | 1.10 | - |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | | 140 | 319706 | | 146515 | | | |
| + : New 12 months low | | | | | | | | | | |
| S : Stock dividend during the past 12 months | | | | | | | | | | |
| N : Listed during the past 12 months | | | | | | | | | | |
| P : P/E ratio is 100 or more | | | | | | | | | | |

Knives out for Olympic candidates

NAGANO (AFP) — Belgian surgeon Jacques Rogge may be carved out of the race to succeed Juan Antonio Samaranch as International Olympic Committee president.

The 55-year-old Rogge, an IOC member since 1991, has long been regarded a potential successor to Samaranch, who says he will stand down in 2001.

However, Rogge will lose the chance to challenge for the top job in sport if he fails to get elected to the IOC Executive Board this week.

"He suddenly seems to have a lot of enemies," said an Olympic source.

South Korean Kim Un Yong, president of the influential television commission, American Anita de Frantz, who became the first woman EB member last year, and Canada's Dick Pound, president of the marketing commission, are reportedly all keen to see Rogge fail.

Marc Hodler, the 79-year-old president of the skiing federation FIS, and 74-year-old Sports Arbitration Court president Keba Mbaye of Senegal were elected to two EB posts on Tuesday as they were unopposed.

Rogge's strongest rival for the third Board vacancy, when

China's He Zhenliang stands down, appears to be Holland's 1964 Tokyo Olympic judo champion Anton Geesink.

The other candidates are Ivan Dibos of Peru and Oligario Vazquez-Rana of Mexico. Vazquez-Rana, an IOC member since 1995 as president of the International Shooting Union, has upset his brother, Mario Vazquez-Rana.

The president of the Association of National Olympic Associations, an IOC member since 1991, believes his brother's elevation to EB status would hurt his own chances of succeeding Samaranch.

Olympic protocol has forced Prince Alexandre de Merode to stand down as a Board vice-president for one year.

As a Belgian de Merode would be unable to reclaim his place on the Board next year if Rogge was elected.

If Rogge is not elected on Thursday then he would have to oppose de Merode, an IOC member since 1964, next year.

Olympic observers have put his chances of defeating de Merode, the Olympic front-man in the battle against drugs, as next to zero.

Nagano villagers fear 'Olympic recession'

NAGANO (AFP) — Concern over an Olympics-inspired recession is mounting among Nagano villagers basking the Winter Games in Japan as the extravaganza drives away lucrative skiing holiday-makers.

"Usually most of the hotels here are fully booked by this time of year, but more than 30 per cent of them are still vacant this year," said Toru Ota, an official at the tourism bureau of Hakuba, western Nagano, the venue of alpine and Nordic ski events.

Expected traffic congestion and strict restrictions on routes to venues appears to be discouraging many skiers from visiting, although several slopes will remain open to the public during the 16-day Winter Games which begin on February 7.

"For some hotel owners the situation is very serious," he said, adding that many hotels counted on individual visitors since only a limited number of hotels will be occupied by Olympic officials.

The Olympics should bring a lot of cash to the city but the Games appear also to have negative side effects which are larger than we expected," he said.

Tosuke Nishi, chairman of the tourism association at Shiga Kogen, another Olympic venue, said: "We have plenty of rooms available despite having mounted a campaign to invite skiers from across the nation."

Nishi said many people planned to go to other ski resorts as they mistakenly believed all accommodation had been filled by Olympic officials, or that pleasure skiers cannot ski in Nagano during the Games.

Nagano, which relies heavily on ski business, had hoped the Olympics would revive the declining industry.

Last year, a total of 2,008,000 people visited Hakuba, down 15 per cent from the previous year, the fourth annual decline.

But the Nagano Research Institute has now forecast losses to the ski business industry could reach 10 billion yen (\$77 million).

"February should be the busiest time of year. But we may have a severe winter as half of the rooms are still empty," a 49-year-old tourist-home owner at Hakuba said.

"We are unlikely to receive any benefit from the Olympics," the owner said.

In Nozawa Onsen, northern Nagano, business conditions are even more serious. Two of the 10 ski lifts will be closed during the biathlon competition due to Japan's strict gun regulations.

"It will cause great damage to us, but we cannot help it," said an official of the village hall's Olympic bureau.

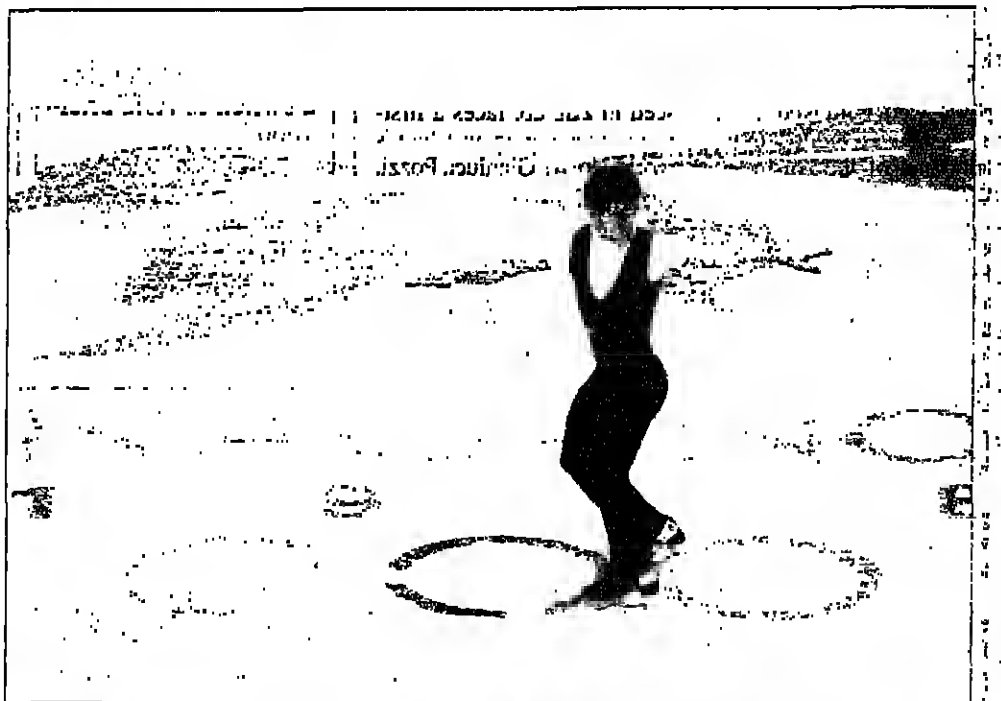
In an effort to protect the local hotel industry, the Nagano Ski Association has already decided not to host any World Cup Alpine or Nordic events for the following two seasons, officials said.



A Japanese soldier shovels snow in front of the Olympic rings in Hakuba February 3. Hundreds of soldiers and volunteers are helping to make final preparations for the XVIII Winter Olympic Games which will start on February 7 (Reuters photo)



Czech Republic's four man bobsleigh team speed down the Spiral track during a practice run in Nagano February 3. Nagano will host the XVIII Winter Olympics starting February 7 and running through February 22 (Reuters photo)



World champion Elvis Stojko of Canada practices for the Nagano Olympic Games men's singles figure skating competition at the White Ring in Nagano, central Japan (Reuters photo)



The XVIII Winter Olympic mascot Snowlets parade before a crowd at Nagano's Zenkoji Temple before the start of a bean throwing festival February 3. Thousands of shrines and temples throughout Japan held similar festivals today as locals welcomed the first day of spring. The XVIII Winter Olympic games open in this central Japanese city on February 7 (Reuters photo)

Eddie the Eagles swoop for Olympic glory

PARIS (AFP) — For some reason the Winter Olympics attracts more Walter Mitty types than the Summer Games.

Perhaps it's because you do not always have to be a fully-fledged athlete at winter sport where often it's the equipment which propels you down the slippery slope.

There's nothing quite like a glorious failure and no-one epitomised that better than Eddie the Eagle at the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

Michael Edwards, an English plasterer with virtually no experience at ski jumping, made the Canadian crowds gasp with fear as he launched himself off the small hill.

He finished a distant last with less than half the points of any other jumper but the crowd loved this 'have a go' competitor whose said of his first attempt: "When I looked from the top of the jump I was so frightened that my bum shivered up like a prune."

His embarrassing flop left its mark in more ways than one.

Norway's Espen Bredenssen was dubbed Espen the Eagle after finishing last in the small hill competition and third-from-last on the large hill at the 1992 Olympics in Albertville, France.

However, two years later he had mastered the V technique, whereby jumpers keep the tips of the skis wide apart, and won the gold medal at the Lillehammer Olympics in his native Norway.

The British Ski Federation is less than happy with Eddie the Eagle. When they were turned down for a grant by the government-funded Sports Council last year they blamed the Eddie the Eagle factor.

"Because of him the people who could help us don't take us seriously," said British Ski Federation chief executive Mike Jardine.

Ski jumping attracts eccentrics but, after Calgary, no more Eddie the Eagles as the ski federation tightened the rules to keep out novices.

Four-times Olympic gold medalist Matti Nykanen, who triumphed three times in Calgary where Eddie was cavorting, has now been reduced to performing as a stripper at a night club.

"Finns understand that I'm going through some bad times," said the 34-year-old whose career ended amidst tales of heavy drinking and fighting.

Nykanen, who became the youngest ski-jumping world champion in 1982 and dominated the sport for almost a decade, once had to sell some of his medals to make ends meet.

Bobsleigh is another deadly serious affair but it has never been the same since it was hit by the Rasta Rocket at Calgary.

A Jamaican crew, who got the idea after watching cart racing in Kingston, financed their trip to Calgary by selling T-shirts and a reggae record and inspired a Hollywood film called Cool Runnings.

Calgary's bobsleigh competition also attracted also four Mexican waiters from Dallas and 52-year-old Harvey Cook of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The warm-weather sliders organised their own Caribbean Cup, which was actually won by New Zealand's Alexander Peterson and Peter Henry, although the best from a truly snow-free country was 29th place by Bart Carpenter Altig and Bart Dreschel of the Netherlands Antilles.

Altig also finished 36th out of 38 in the luge singles.

However, the Jamaican pilot, Dudley

Stokes, spoiled the image of these bumbling amateurs when he actually finished 14th, ahead of both the American sleds, in Lillehammer's four-man event.

Nationalistic pride also encourages the unlikely competitors to have a go.

Joe Almasian and Ken Topalian, born and raised in the U.S., paid for their own second-hand bobsleigh to fly Armenia's flag at Lillehammer.

"In the opening ceremonies to walk out of the tunnel into the stadium behind the Armenian flag, while 50,000 people are screaming for you. Words can't express the feeling," Almasian said.

They were still grinning when they finished 36th out of 43 competitors in the two-man competition. Some of these Eddie the Eagles turn out to be unsung heroes.

Robert Scott Detlof, a Brazilian-born American representing Brazil, had decided to withdraw from the 1992 slalom after twisting his knee training, until told the Brazilian Ski Federation would have to pay 2,500 dollars to cover his expenses if he did not compete.

He duly put on his skis and completed both runs.

But he could not match the well-oiled Costa Rica's Alejandro Preinfalk LaVagni got at the end of his second slalom run.

Norway's Finn Christian Jagge and Italy's Alberto Tomba, who had won the gold and silver medals, boistered him onto their shoulders after he had gingerly crept down the slalom course.

Hopefully, there will be more Eddie the Eagles trying to fly at Nagano.

Wembley left with sour taste in the mouth

LONDON (AFP) — The owners of Wembley stadium, the home of English football, were left with a sour taste in the mouth on Tuesday when the food at the famous stadium was rated as amongst the worst in the country.

According to a new report on food at English football grounds, Wembley is ranked 89th out of 93, with inspectors describing the food at Britain's showcase stadium as "awful".

Lower division clubs dominate at the top of the English football food league, with Cambridge United — seventh from the bottom of the third division — in first place.

Champions Manchester United are the best-placed Premiership club — finishing in 12th place. And the guide says the worst food can be found at east London third division outfit Leyton Orient.

The guide reserves some of its fiercest criticism for Wembley, saying: "The nation's showcase stadium epitomises everything that's wrong with food at football

grounds in this country, an awful, over-priced eating experience."

A Wembley spokesman said the stadium had recently taken on new caterers and offered good value food.

"We take all criticism on board and learn from it but to position Wembley like this is ridiculous," the spokesman added.

Presenting the awards today, football commentator John Motson backed the guide's low estimation of Wembley food, which once turned an England international into a 90-minute battle with his stomach.

He recalled an incident several years ago: "Before the match, (former England midfielder) Trevor Brooking went for hot dogs and I got the teas in, and within minutes of biting into the hot dog, I had a serious stomach upset."

"I don't remember anything about the match, but I do remember the stomach upset. It lasted for days afterwards."

Philippoussis out of Aussie Davis Cup squad

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian number two Mark Philippoussis has been replaced by teenager Lleyton Hewitt in Australia's Davis Cup squad announced Tuesday for the clash with Zimbabwe in April.

"Mark has decided not to play Davis Cup this year," said team captain John Newcombe.

"He advised he wishes to spend more time with his family when he's not playing on the Tour." He will, however, compete in 1999 if selected.

The 20-year-old Philippoussis is in the United States preparing for the San Jose Open.

The Australian team for the first round clash includes Pat Rafter, Jason Stoltenberg, Todd Woodbridge, Mark Woodforde, Scott Draper and Hewitt.

Richard Fromberg and Sandon Stolle will join the team throughout year if needed.

Hewitt, who rocketed through the world rankings after winning the Australian Men's Hardcourt Championship in Adelaide last month, said he looked forward to the experience of being in the squad.

"I've been sort of the orange boy in the past, twice last year, and it's going to be good just to be hitting with the guys and playing practice sets and stuff and we'll see what happens," he said.

Newcombe said the team was hungry for a title. "Zimbabwe will be pumped but we feel we've got the right ingredients to get off to a good start."

But Zimbabwe, spearheaded by the in-form brothers Byron and Wayne Black, will present a strong challenge. Byron made it to the fourth round of the just completed Australian Open while Wayne reached the third round.

The tie takes place on grass at Mildura, in Victoria state, from April 3 to 5.

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|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|--|-------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PHILADELPHIA "1" | | PHILADELPHIA "2" | | PLAZA | | CONCORD | | GALLERIA 2 | | GALLERIA 1 | | NOW ON DAILY | |
| Pierce Brosnan as James Bond | | PINOCCHIO | Shows: 12:30, 3:30 | SPEED 2 | Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 | CONCORD "1" | Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) | ABDOUN | Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) | ABDOUN | HOME ALONE 3 | THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE | |
| 007...TOMORROW NEVER DIES | | THE PEACEMAKER | Shows: 8:30, 10:30 | GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE | Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 5:00 | CONCORD "2" | MR. BEAN | Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30 | Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30 | Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 | | Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas | |
| Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 | | | | | | | | | | | | For reservations call: 640155, 625155 | |

SCOREBOARD

NBA

| | | | |
|------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| Washington | 113 | Deuot | 101 |
| Cleveland | 109 | Minnesota | 99 |
| Miami | 90 | Atlanta | 83 |
| Phoenix | 106 | Philadelphia | 97 |
| Dallas | 104 | Vancouver | 90 |
| Chicago | 111 | Denver | 72 |

NHL

| | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------|---|
| NY Islanders | 4 | Pittsburgh | 2 |
| New Jersey | 1 | Ottawa | 0 |
| Buffalo | 7 | Tampa Bay | 3 |
| Dallas | 5 | Toronto | 1 |
| Edmonton | 1 | Los Angeles | 0 |
| Colorado | 2 | Vancouver | 1 |
| Ny Rangers | 3 | San Jose | 2 |

Spanish first division

| | | | |
|-------------|---|----------|---|
| Real Madrid | 1 | Valencia | 2 |
|-------------|---|----------|---|

Scottish Cup

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|------------|-------|
| Third Round Replay | | | |
| Albion | 0 | Livingston | 0 aet |
| (Albion win 6-5 on penalties) | | | |
| League Premier Division | | | |
| Celtic | 3 | Aberdeen | 1 |

Greek Championship

| | | | |
|------------|---|------------|---|
| AEK Athens | 1 | Olympiakos | 0 |
|------------|---|------------|---|

Marseille ATP Tour

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Marc-Kevin Goellner (Ger) bt Andrea Gaudenzi (Ita) | 7/6, 6/2 |
| Albert Portas (Spa x7) bt Alex Lopez-Moron (Spa) | 6/3, 6/3 |
| Magnus Gustafsson (Swe) bt Johan Van Herck (Bel) | 6-7 (7/1), 6-4 |
| Sebastien Grosjean (Fra) bt Jeff Tarango (USA) | 6-3, 6-4 |

Henman's slump continues

SPLIT (AFP) — Tim Henman's disastrous run since reaching the Sydney final last month continued here on Monday when he crashed out in the first-round of the \$375,000 ATP tournament to fast-improving 21-year-old German player Rainer Schuttler.

The third-seeded British player, who is ranked 18 in the world and who lost in the first-round of the Australian Open, went down 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 to his 115th-ranked opponent from Bad Hamburg. Henman had been hoping for a good run in Zagreb to erase the memory of his five-set loss to Frenchman Jerome Golmard in Melbourne when, in his own words, he played some of the "worst tennis" of his career.

But he failed to raise his game against Schuttler who was not ranked in the world top-300 twelve months ago. In other first-round matches, second-seed and home favourite Goran Ivanisevic put his recent injuries and poor form behind him, saved a set point in the opening set, and notched up a straight-sets 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 win over another German David Prinosil. The other seeds on duty also won their matches — fourth-seeded Andrei Medvedev of the Ukraine

coming back after dropping the first set to defeat Spaniard Alex Calatrava 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (11/9), 6-3, and seventh-seed Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic putting out Jens Knippschild of Germany 6-3, 6-7 (7/9), 7-5.

British No. 1 Greg Rusedski, who is the top-seed in Zagreb, faces a first-round meeting against Italy's world No. 81 Gianluca Pozzi.

Grand Slam Cup welcomes women for first time

MUNICH (AFP) — Women will take part in the Grand Slam Cup for the first time this autumn, organisers confirmed on Tuesday. The eight best performers in the year's Grand Slam events will take part in the event from September 29 to October 4 with \$800,000 at stake for the winner.

In turn the men's event, held since 1990, will be reduced to 12 entrants from 16 last year, with the winner receiving \$1.3 million.

"We have always had the ambition to make the Grand Slam Cup a tournament for both the men and the women," said tournament director Bill Dennis.

It was also confirmed on Tuesday that the tournament will remain in Munich until 2001. At last year's event there had been talk of a switch to Asia after 1999.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Real Madrid throw away chance

MADRID (AFP) — Real Madrid failed to take their chance to recapture the leadership of the Spanish first division here Monday when they were beaten 2-1 at home by Valencia. Real, one point behind pacesetters Barcelona, never recovered after the visitors took a shock 2-0 lead after just 17 minutes — thanks to a penalty from Mendicita and a goal from Ilic. Croat frontrunner Davor Suker pulled one back for Real with a 68th minute penalty but the home side were never able to get on top. It was only a ninth win in 21 league matches for Valencia.

Celtic storm back

GLASGOW (AFP) — Celtic proved their Premier division title mettle by clinching a 3-1 victory over Aberdeen at Parkhead after going behind to an early goal. The victory puts Wm Jansen's men into a three-way tie at the top of the table on 48 points with Rangers and Hearts. Aberdeen opened the scoring after just nine minutes when David Rowson's ambitious drive benefited from a touch by Alan Stubbs which wrothfooted goalkeeper Jonathan Gould. But Celtic played their way back into the match with Morten Wieghorst launching their fightback after 22 minutes. Henrik Larsson then found time and space in the Dons' area to punish hesitant defending with a firm header to move Celtic ahead after 35 minutes. Celtic stayed in charge and they sealed the match thanks to substitutes Simon Donnelly and Darren Jackson who combined superbly with the latter hooking the ball into the roof of the net from close range after Donnelly's left wing cross.

Grosjean delights home fans

MARSEILLE (AFP) — Local player Sebastien Grosjean followed up his junior title triumph at the Australian Open by winning his first-round match against American Jeff Tarango at the \$539,250 ATP event here Monday. Grosjean, ranked 145th, scored a 6-3, 6-4 win over the 58th-ranked France-based American who was involved in several protests with the umpire over line decisions in the day's other matches seventh-seed Albert Portas of Spain beat compatriot Alex Lopez-Moron 6-3, 6-3, Marc-Kevin Goellner of Germany saw off Andrea Gaudenzi of Italy 7-6 (7/3), 6-2, and Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson defeated Johan Van Herck of Belgium 6-7 (7/1), 6-4, 6-2.

Muster rules out Davis Cup play

VIENNA (AFP) — Thomas Muster has ruled out playing in Austria's Davis Cup match against Israel in Tel Aviv in April, saying he needs to play on clay and concentrate on improving his world ranking. Muster, whose ranking has sunk to 15th in the world after a series of poor results, said he would not be available for the Euro-Africa zone match from April 3-5. "Because of the terrible situation with my ATP Tour points, I am forced to concentrate on getting ready for the big clay court tournaments," Muster said. The Israel-Austria match is scheduled to be played on a hardcourt surface.

Maleeva upsets Huber in Toray Pan Pacific Open

TOKYO (AFP) — Magdalena Maleeva stormed back from match point down to beat sixth seed Anke Huber of Germany on the opening day of the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old Bulgarian was one set and 5-6, 30-40 down in the 11th game when she fired a timely ace to save it before staging a remarkable comeback victory 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-1.

Fifth-seeded Irina Spirlea of Romania powered past Park Sung-Hee of South Korea 7-5, 6-0, while Japan's ace Ai Sugiyama, eighth seed, overcame a slow start to beat Kerry-Anne Guse of Australia 7-6 (7/3), 6-0.

"Nothing," said Maleeva when she was asked how she felt when match point down. "I don't remember. I just tried to stay positive. I tried to think of just another point."

A frustrated Huber, ranked 13th against Maleeva's 31st, seemed to lose her nerve after missing the match point and threw her racket several times when she made an error in the crucial tie-breaker.

Huber lost a 3-0 lead in the tie-breaker. Maleeva and Huber kept their serves to 1-1 in the decider, but the spirited Bulgarian narrowly won all the following close games to secure a berth in the second round.

"I knew I don't have very much confidence, because I haven't played very well, but as the match went on, I could see what my game looks like when I play well," said Maleeva, who was once ranked fourth two years ago.

Maleeva, yet to win a title since October 1995 at Oakland, said her ranking went down because she had



Anke Huber

"a lot of back problems" and then she fractured her left wrist last year.

"But I have been working as hard as I ever had. I didn't work so hard when I was in the top 10. I hope I can go back to top 20 first and then top 10 this year. But I'll take each match and I'm really happy I won today," she said.

Meanwhile, Croatian teenage sensation Mirjana Lucic failed to clear the first hurdle as the 15-year-old Australian Open doubles champion crashed to Elena Likhoviseva of Russia 1-6, 2-6.

Japan's wild card entrants Miho Saeki defeated Magui Serna of Spain 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, and Yuka Yoshida edged past Magdalena Grzybowska of Poland 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

Rita Grande of Italy downed Kristie Boogert of the Netherlands 3-6, 6-1, 6-4, while Chinese qualifier Li Fang knocked out Thailand's Tamarine Tanasugarn 6-1, 6-3 in a battle of the two countries' top players.

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Sri Lanka which celebrates its 50th Anniversary of independence on the 04th of February 1998 has gone through many good and bad spells. I sincerely hope that with the advent of the 50th Anniversary of Independent, Peace and Prosperity will prevail at all levels and restore Sri Lanka as a resplendent Isle.

May I also take this opportunity to wish the Organizers of these Celebrations in the Kingdom of Jordan, all success in their efforts to celebrate this occasion.

D.A.KANNANGARA
Chairman

Invitation for Pre-Qualification of Contractors For the Construction of Integrated Development Project for the Southern Ghors

The Government of Jordan had the final design and tender documents prepared for the works listed below. It has secured funds from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development towards the finance of construction and supervision of these works. The three dams listed are to be constructed of Roller Compacted Concrete (RCC) with the properties as described:-

- Wala Dam, 49m high, 300m long, 9.3MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 185,000m³.
- Mujib Dam, 82m high, 680m long, 35MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 750,000m³.
- Tannur Dam, 69m high, 240m long, 16.8MCM storage capacity, and estimated roller compacted concrete volume 260,000m³.
- Diversion weir at Mujib, with a 1.3 kms long tunnel, the southern conveyor 73.5 km long, northern conveyor 28 km long, and irrigation infrastructure for 11,862 dunums.

It is anticipated that the construction of the project will be divided into five separate contracts:

1. Construction of Wala Dam.
2. Construction of Tannur Dam.
3. Construction of Mujib Dam.
4. Construction of Mujib Weir and Conveyors.
5. Construction of Irrigation Infrastructure.

The Contract Documents and all correspondence related to the contract will be in the English language. Applications for pre-qualification are invited from International Contractors in association with Jordanian Contractors classified by the Government Tenders Directorate (G.T.D.) as First and Second Grade in the field of:

- a) Water and Sewerage or Roads or Concrete/Bridges & Culverts for Contracts 1,2,3 and 4.
- b) Water and Sewerage for Contract No. 5.

The International Contractor does not have to include the name of his local associate at the time of pre-qualification, however, the pre-qualification document should include a statement by the International Contractor to confirm his commitment to enter into an association at the tender stage with a local contractor, having the same classification stated above, and to submit the association agreement. International Contractors willing to participate in pre-qualification for the above project are invited to collect the pre-qualification documents in accordance with the following terms:

1. The share of local contractors shall be at least 25% of the total contract value.
2. All given information must be correct and accurate.
3. The International Contractors shall comply with the law of the Jordanian Engineering Association and Jordanian Contractors Association regarding registration.
4. The documents can be purchased for the following non-refundable fee:
 - a) JD150 for the pre-qualification document of "Wala and Tannur Dams" (one combined document).
 - b) JD150 for the pre-qualification document of "Mujib Dam."
 - c) JD150 for the pre-qualification document of "Mujib Weir, Tunnel, Conveyors, and Irrigation Infrastructure."
5. The deadline set for the purchase of pre-qualification document shall be on February 10th, 1998.
6. The pre-qualification proposals shall be submitted to the Jordan Valley Authority (address below) not later than 13:00 hours (local time) on March 15th, 1998.

Address
Special Committee for the Mujib and Southern Ghors Project Address:
P.O. Box 2769, Amman - Jordan
Fax: 962-6-5689916
Tel.: 962-6-5689-400
Tel.: 962-6-5689-464

Jordan Valley Authority
Secretary General
Dr. Dureid Mahasneh

Jordan Phosphate Mines Co., Ltd. Announces the invitation to Tender No. 6F/98

JPMC announces the invitation to bid No. 6F/98 for the supply of:

(Empty paper bags for ALF3)

The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman Supply Department until 2:00 p.m. local time Thursday 19th February, 1998. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD30 for each set of tender documents. The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours local time Saturday 28th February, 1998.

Sameh Madent
Managing Director

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Save the Children is recruiting for the position of PROGRAMME MANAGER

This is one of the top senior level management positions within the office. The responsibilities of this position include assisting in strategic planning and taking the lead role in programme development. This position is also responsible for implementation of multiple programmes in both the Education and Health sectors as well as the management of multiple layers of programme staff. Other responsibilities include programme representation with donors, proposal preparation, and all office reporting. Applicants should have 3-5 years community development experience in a management position as well as excellent verbal and written communication skills in both English and Arabic. An ability to strategise with strong planning and organisational skills is essential. Basic computer skills are also quite important. Demonstrated personnel development/training experience also a plus.

Interested candidates should send their CV by fax to: 612902 or P.O. Box 9363, Amman 11191, Jordan. CVs received after February 8, 1998 will not be considered.



GENDER APARTHEID: A woman doctor from Afghanistan, veiled in a traditional burqa, speaks Tuesday at the Breydel building during a news conference with European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, Emma Bonino (right) and European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs, Anita Gradin (left). The doctor, asking not to be identified for security reasons, said the repression against women by the purist Taliban regime is anti-Islamic. A group of 50 prominent women, dedicating the forthcoming International Women's Day to the women in Afghanistan, urged the international community to step up pressure for an end to the 'gender apartheid' installed by the Taliban regime (Reuters photo)

Israel demolishes Arab home in front of parliament deputies

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Israeli army destroyed the home of a Palestinian near the West Bank town of Ramallah Tuesday while a tour of Israeli parliament deputies looked on. A bulldozer, accompanied by Israeli troops, demolished the unfinished three-room home belonging to Ali Samhan, located near a road leading to a Jewish settlement outside the village of Ras Karkar, witnesses said.

A group of Israeli parliament deputies happened to be at the

site as they took a tour of Jewish settlements in the Ramallah area organised by the Palestinian information ministry.

A large crowd of Palestinians gathered during the demolition and a woman from the Samhan family shouted at the soldiers and the parliament deputies, but no disturbances took place.

The parliament deputies, most of them from left-wing opposition parties, made no comment about the house

demolition to journalists accompanying the tour.

The Israeli army frequently demolishes Palestinian homes which have been built without receiving permits from West Bank occupation authorities.

But Palestinians complain the authorities rarely grant the permits and accuse Israel of using house demolitions to reduce Arab populations in the 70 per cent of the West Bank still under complete Israeli control.

Palestinian dies after beating in PNA custody — rights group

HEBRON (AFP) — A human rights group accused Palestinian police Tuesday of beating to death a Palestinian who died overnight under mysterious circumstances while in police custody.

But the office of the chief of police in the West Bank town of Hebron denied Nasser Al Hurub, 20, had been beaten, saying he committed suicide in the police station by "strangling himself with his shoelaces."

The rights group, the Prisoners' Club said, Hurub was "detained by the police criminal investigations division during which he was attacked and suffered severe haemorrhaging from the nose and ears."

"We demand an investiga-

tion into his death and the punishment and trial of those officials responsible," said the Bethlehem-based group, which deals with prisoners' rights, in a statement received by AFP.

An aide to the Hebron police chief denied Hurub had been beaten, saying he committed suicide after being called into for questioning on "a criminal case" by police in the village of Dura, outside Hebron.

Hurub "was left alone in a room to write an affidavit and when police returned to the room they found he had strangled himself with his shoelaces," the aide, who asked not to be named, told AFP.

The aide would not specify the charges for which Hurub

had been called in for questioning, saying only that Hurub, a resident of the nearby village of Deir Samet, had a criminal record.

Hurub's body was taken to a hospital in Bethlehem for an autopsy, hospital sources said. Hurub becomes the 19th person to die while in the custody of Palestinian security services since the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994. Seven people died in 1997, according to human rights groups.

Human rights groups have said some of the deaths were due to torture or police brutality and have accused the PNA of not properly investigating the causes of death or punishing security agents.

Cabalist rabbi to mobilise angels against Saddam, ward off incoming rockets

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A leading rabbinical mystic plans to hold a special prayer in Tel Aviv calling on the angels to protect Israel from an eventual missile attack from Iraq, the rabbi's son said on Tuesday.

Rabbi David Batzri, a specialist in the cabala system of Jewish mysticism, will hold the ceremony in the coming days, Moshe Batzri told Israel Radio.

"My father will go to Tel Aviv to hold special prayers calling on the angels to pro-

tect Israel if it is attacked by 'Saddam Hussein,' he said, referring to the Iraqi president.

"In the meantime, people must pray once a day and perform good acts" to ward off Iraqi hostility, he said.

The Maariv newspaper said Rabbi Batzri also planned, if Iraq fired missiles at Israel, to fly around Israel seven times in a helicopter to deflect the rockets.

Iraq fired 39 missiles on Israel during the 1991 Gulf war, killing two persons and

wounding hundreds.

The government has initiated precautionary measures in case Iraq fires more missiles in the event that the United States carries through on threats to attack Baghdad if it persists in barring U.N. inspectors from sites suspected of hiding illegal weapons of mass destruction.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said on Tuesday that the likelihood of an Iraqi attack was "very small."

Richardson is four-for-four in lining up Council support for action against Iraq

NAIROBI (AP) — Bill Richardson, the American ambassador to the United Nations, won support Tuesday from a critical African member of the U.N. Security Council for a possible military strike on Iraq.

Mr. Richardson, on a tour to visit eight of the 14 other Security Council members, said Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi supported the American position of diplomacy with Iraq backed by strong military pressure.

"We're four-for-four," he said after leaving the presidential mansion.

During a trip that began Friday in Stockholm, Mr. Richardson said he had won the backing of Security Council members Sweden, Slovenia, Portugal and Kenya. Next stop is Gabon, followed by Gambia, Brazil and Costa Rica.

Kenya's backing, he said, "is particularly important because Kenya is a member of the non-aligned group at the United Nations, and Kenya is viewed as a leader in Africa. It is important we get its support for our initiatives."

Mr. Richardson and his aides gave President Moi a thorough

briefing on the situation in Iraq, both on the weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Iraq and military details of the potential military strike on Iraqi targets.

"So far, we have solidified our base of support," the ambassador said of his tour, important for follow-up initiatives at the Security Council.

"It's a good investment in retail politics and diplomacy," according to the American envoy, President Moi was concerned about whether the military option could succeed.

The question of what the next step would be if air strikes fail to bring President Hussein to his knees has not been clearly spelled out by Washington. Mr. Richardson, for one, refuses to answer the question.

The next stop on the tour is also important because Gabon takes over the presidency of the Security Council in February.

Gabon frequently follows suit with the French, who have been opposed to any military action, though their position seems to have softened lately. Brazil has shown a certain independence on the Security Council. Costa Rica has indicated concern about a military operation.

IOC fears U.S. may break Olympic Truce

NAGANO (AFP) — The possibility of U.S. airstrikes against Iraq during the Winter Olympics which start here Saturday is causing concern within the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

There is some concern among the IOC and the members of the Olympic Family gathered in Nagano that the Olympic Truce will not be fully respected as in the Lillehammer Games," said Fekru Kidane, who lobbied for the truce on behalf of the IOC and Nagano Olympic organisers.

IOC General Secretary Francois Carrard refused to comment on the possibility that IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch would be in contact with President Bill Clinton.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Monday in Washington he was not aware of any U.S. policy that called for delaying a possible attack on Iraq until after the Games.

But Mr. Carrard stressed that the U.S. had signed and joined up with the Olympic Truce which was proposed by Japan and adopted unanimously by the U.N. General Assembly last November.

Mr. Carrard added: "We hope the truce will be respected. It is a highly symbolic gesture. There is hope that maybe the Olympic Truce will become reality." Eishiro Saito, president of the Games' organising committee, also expressed his concern.

"It is my earnest hope that the Nagano Games can act as a catalyst in enlarging the circle of people who work to ensure a durable peace," said Mr. Saito. The idea of an Olympic Truce was revived for the 1994 Winter Games in Lillehammer during the Bosnian conflict and again for the Centennial Games of 1996 in Atlanta.

Under the truce, the U.N. calls for a halt of hostilities around the world during the Olympic Games.

New U.S. 'bunker busting' bombs explode underground to destroy buried targets

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. military has a new family of "bunker busting" bombs to choose from if it decides to strike Iraq's underground command posts or buried caches of weapons of mass destruction, officials say.

Faced with deeply buried bunkers during the 1991 Gulf war, the U.S. Air Force launched a crash programme to develop bombs able to penetrate the earth and detonate underground.

Since then, U.S. air force engineers have developed a variety of warheads and fuses designed to get at buried targets with greater precision.

The most powerful is BLU-113, a penetrating warhead that saw action at the end of the Gulf war. It rides a 5,000 pound laser-guided bomb dropped by a F-15E fighter.

The latest is called the Advanced Unitary Penetrator (AUP), a warhead for a 2,000 pound bomb that will plow twice as far through dirt and reinforced concrete as any existing bomb of that size, U.S. air force officials say.

How deep these bombs go before blowing up is secret, however.

Frank Robbins, the U.S. air force official in charge of developing precision strike weapons, would say only, "we can penetrate to great depths now."

"We have been improving our ability to go deeper and to sense where we are once we go to larger depth," he said in a telephone interview from Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

"The vast majority of military targets are not at great depths, but there may be selected targets that are beyond the reach of our penetrators," he said.

Besides detonating the warhead below ground, said Mr. Robbins, "it will also let you count how many rooms you've gone through so you can have it go off in the first room, the second room, or the third room."

"That becomes important when we're to look at certain target scenarios. It might be a room three stories down that would house the most critical

Mr. Robbins said the AUP warhead "is fresh out of development. We produced more than we needed in case they were needed operationally."

The AUP can go on any of the U.S. air force's 2,000 pound bombs, which gives commanders a broader choice of ways to deliver it.

It can be used with the AGM-130, an air-to-surface missile that can be fired from an F-15E strike fighter and guided to a target up to 40 nautical miles away with either infrared or television guidance systems.

Laser guided bombs dropped by F-117 Stealth fighters, F-16 fighters and F-15s also can carry the new warhead.

Besides the AUP, the U.S. air force has the BLU-109, another penetrating warhead designed for use with 2,000 pound bombs.

"In addition to needing to penetrate to a certain depth, you need to be able to have [the bomb] go off when you reach that depth. So we have two new fuses in our inventory," said Mr. Robbins.

The most innovative is the hard target smart fuse, which Mr. Robbins said has been through "significant development tests" and is being readied for full production. Extras were built in case they were needed for military operations.

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"That becomes important when we're to look at certain target scenarios. It might be a room three stories down that would house the most critical

Exiles: Hussein has nuclear proof underground hideout

PARIS (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has a vast subterranean bomb shelter, a nuclear-proof "mini-city" where he could hide for months from a U.S. attack with no outside help, Iraqi exiles in Europe said Tuesday.

These exiles, once close to the Iraqi leader, told AFP the giant shelter was designed by then-East German engineers and built during the 1980s when Iraq was at war with Iran.

They said President Hussein had always been fascinated with underground shelters, and that the weapons of mass destruction currently the object of U.N. weapons inspectors were undoubtedly hidden beneath ground.

"The Americans can search for the weapons of mass destruction all they want, they won't find them because they, also, are buried," said these sources.

The sources said the sonar scanners used by U.N. weapons inspectors in 1993 to locate President Hussein's weapons of mass destruction had found nothing because the weapons were buried too deep.

"These scanners can only detect arms to a depth of 10 metres [33 feet], and Saddam knows it," they said. "They need a more advanced system to find Saddam's arsenal."

They said that although German engineers had designed the Iraqi president's underground bomb shelter, it had been built exclusively by Iraqis to keep the exact location a secret.

The "façade" of the 'builders remains uncertain, they said. The Iraqi exiles described the bomb shelter as a veritable palace, equipped to withstand nuclear attack, in which President Hussein and his immediate family could live in total comfort for months.

"The shelter has everything, even a gymnasium with sauna and a 'pau' complete with artificial plants to provide Saddam the illusion that he is taking the air in his garden," they said.

The shelter is powered by its own underground electricity generating plant and equipped with a sophisticated telephone system, they said, adding the facility was so vast that it had to be equipped in the 1990s with electric cars for getting around.

To deal with the problem of attacking underground chemical or biological weapons caches, the U.S. air force has come up with an incendiary bomb coupled with a penetrating warhead.

Exploded underground, the incendiary bomb would generate intense heat to burn up the chemicals or biological agents released by the blast, according to Mr. Robbins.

Already in production is another fuse called the Joint Programmable Fuse, built to survive the impact of hitting the earth from the highest altitude. Mr. Robbins said it showed "unprecedented reliability" in tests, has gone into production and is available to the U.S. military.

Both have been blamed on extremist groups. Testifying before a British parliamentary committee on Jan. 22, Mr. Brahimi said "terror is organised by the state" and that the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) — blamed for much of the recent killing in Algeria — was "a part of the government."

"It is the military security who organised the bombings [in France] in 1994 and 1995," he said.

Though Algeria now formally has an elected regime under President Liamine Zerroual, Western diplomats say the military retain great influence over the state.

Algerian military want to take former PM to court — report

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria's influential armed forces want to take former Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Brahimi to court for his alleged responsibility in civilian massacres, an Algerian newspaper said Tuesday.

La Nouvelle Republique said a case against Mr. Brahimi — who lives in exile in London — was being drawn up by military headquarters to determine exactly what charges could be pressed against him.

But a decision has yet to be taken on whether the matter will actually go to court, the newspaper said, quoting a source close to the defence ministry.

Mr. Brahimi was prime minister under President Chadli Benjedid from January 1984 until his dismissal in November 1988 in the wake of bloody riots provoked by spiralling prices.

He has been in exile in Britain since the military in 1992 cancelled elections that the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) looked set to win.

To interviews with Arabic-language media, including satellite television channels that can be seen in Algeria, Mr. Brahimi accused the military of carrying out massacres at home and a 1994-95 bombing wave in France.

Anwar under police guard after 'bango' was found in car

CAIRO (AFP) — A popular Egyptian actress recovering from a road accident was placed under police guard in the hospital after authorities allegedly found marijuana in her car, court officials said.

Samah Anwar, 33, emerged from intensive care at a Cairo hospital on Sunday and was served notice that she was under hospital arrest because "bango" (marijuana) had been found in her car. On Saturday the actress smashed her car against an electricity pylon in northern Cairo as she drove to a party. Police later found 580 grammes of "bango" in the actress' smashed up car, legal sources said.

Queen Mother has champagne smuggled into hospital — report

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Queen Mother arranged to have a case of vintage Krug champagne smuggled into the hospital where she is recovering from a hip replacement operation. The case of 12 bottles — \$160 a bottle — was taken, by her private chef into London's King Edward VII hospital, disguised as a food parcel. The Daily Star said Tuesday. The Queen Mother had been told she would have to give up alcohol for two weeks, but after a week of abstinence, a "royal insider" quoted by the Star, said "she was getting bored and old and is desperate to get out of hospital and start enjoying life again. British newspapers had speculated on how long the 97-year-old, a keen gin drinker, would be able to refrain from alcohol.

Spanish crown prince wants 'love match'

MADRID (AFP) — Prince Felipe de Borbon, heir to the Spanish throne, wants his marriage to be a "love match," he said in a television interview. He said his marriage would be the result of a "relationship based on love, respect, tenderness." Alluding to the keen interest of the popular press in his sentimental life, Prince Felipe said: "I know there are a lot of reports about my marriage. I will just have to smile and put up with them." Asked if his bride would be of royal lineage or not, the prince replied: "I have already said several times that I did not feel obliged to marry" a princess. "But that does not mean that I have ruled out that option."

Tiffani-Amber Thiessen to quit 'Beverly Hills, 90210'

NEW YORK (AP) — "Beverly Hills, 90210" star Tiffani-Amber Thiessen is moving. Thiessen, who plays Valerie Malone, one of the melodrama's nastiest characters, has already notified show officials about her plans to quit. TV Guide reports in its Feb. 7-13 issue. It was unclear why she decided to leave.

Cards come up trumps for all four players

LONDON (AFP) — Four British card players were hoping to get into the Guinness Book of Records after each was dealt a perfect hand of whist — 13 cards all of the same suit, media reports said. Hilda Golding, 87, could not believe her eyes after she was dealt a complete suit of clubs during the game at a local village hall in southern England. Her three companions were also dealt perfect sets of hearts, spades and diamonds. The odds of just one person getting a perfect hand at whist or bridge are calculated at 635 billion to one. A Guinness Book of Records spokesman said the odds of four getting perfect hands were 2,235,197,406,895,366,368 to 1.